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Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Twentieth session (19 January-5 February 1999)

Twenty-first session (7-25 June 1999)

General Assembly
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United Nations • New York, 1999

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Part one
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its twentieth session

Letter of transmittal

20 April 1999

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its twentieth session from 19 January to 5 February 1999 at United Nations Headquarters. It adopted its report on the session at its 424th meeting, on 5 February 1999. The report of the Committee is herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

(*Signed*) Aída **González Martínez**
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

His Excellency Mr. Kofi **Annan**
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I
Matters brought to the attention of States parties

A. General recommendation 24 (twentieth session)

Article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women — women and health

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, affirming that access to health care, including reproductive health, is a basic right under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, decided at its twentieth session, pursuant to article 21, to elaborate a general recommendation on article 12 of the Convention.

Background

2. States parties' compliance with article 12 of the Convention is central to the health and well-being of women. It requires States to eliminate discrimination against women in their access to health-care services throughout the life cycle, particularly in the areas of family planning, pregnancy and confinement and during the post-natal period. The examination of reports submitted by States parties pursuant to article 18 of the Convention demonstrates that women's health is an issue that is recognized as a central concern in promoting the health and well-being of women. For the benefit of States parties and those who have a particular interest in and concern with the issues surrounding women's health, the present general recommendation seeks to elaborate the Committee's understanding of article 12 and to address measures to eliminate discrimination in order to realize the right of women to the highest attainable standard of health.

3. Recent United Nations world conferences have also considered these objectives. In preparing this general recommendation, the Committee has taken into account relevant programmes of action adopted at United Nations world conferences and, in particular, those of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. The Committee has also noted the work of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other United Nations bodies. It has collaborated with a large number of non-governmental organizations with a special expertise in women's health in preparing this general recommendation.

4. The Committee notes the emphasis that other United Nations instruments place on the right to health and to the conditions that enable good health to be achieved. Among such instruments are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

5. The Committee refers also to its earlier general recommendations on female circumcision, human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), disabled women, violence against women and equality in family relations, all of which refer to issues that are integral to full compliance with article 12 of the Convention.

6. While biological differences between women and men may lead to differences in health status, there are societal factors that are determinative of the health status of women and men and can vary among women themselves. For that reason, special attention should be given to the health needs and rights of women belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women, refugee and internally displaced women, the girl child and older women, women in prostitution, indigenous women and women with physical or mental disabilities.

7. The Committee notes that the full realization of women's right to health can be achieved only when States parties fulfil their obligation to respect, protect and promote women's fundamental human right to nutritional well-being throughout their lifespan by means of a food supply that is safe, nutritious and adapted to local conditions. To this end, States parties should take steps to facilitate physical and economic access to productive resources, especially for rural women, and to otherwise ensure that the special nutritional needs of all women within their jurisdiction are met.

Article 12

8. Article 12 reads as follows:

> "1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health-care services, including those related to family planning.

> "2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation."

States parties are encouraged to address the issue of women's health throughout the woman's lifespan. For the purposes of the present general recommendation, therefore, "women" includes girls and adolescents. The general recommendation will set out the Committee's analysis of the key elements of article 12.

Key elements

Article 12 (1)

9. States parties are in the best position to report on the most critical health issues affecting women in that country. Therefore, in order to enable the Committee to evaluate whether measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care are appropriate, States parties must report on their health legislation, plans and policies for women with reliable data disaggregated by sex on the incidence and severity of diseases and conditions hazardous to women's health and nutrition and on the availability and cost-effectiveness of preventive and curative measures. Reports to the Committee must demonstrate that health legislation, plans and policies are based on scientific and ethical research and assessment of the health status and needs of women in that country and take into account any ethnic, regional or community variations or practices based on religion, tradition or culture.

10. States parties are encouraged to include in their reports information on diseases, health conditions and conditions hazardous to health that affect women or certain groups of women differently from men, as well as information on possible intervention in this regard.

11. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women are considered to be inappropriate if a health-care system lacks services to prevent, detect and treat illnesses specific to women. It is discriminatory for a State party to refuse to provide legally for the performance of certain reproductive health services for women. For instance, if health service providers refuse to perform such services based on conscientious objection, measures should be introduced to ensure that women are referred to alternative health providers.

12. States parties should report on their understanding of how policies and measures on health care address the health rights of women from the perspective of women's needs and interests and how it addresses distinctive features and factors that differ for women in comparison to men, such as:

(a) Biological factors that differ for women in comparison with men, such as their menstrual cycle, their reproductive function and menopause. Another example is the higher risk of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases that women face;

(b) Socio-economic factors that vary for women in general and some groups of women in particular. For example, unequal power relationships between women and men in the home and workplace may negatively affect women's nutrition and health. They may also be exposed to different forms of violence which can affect their health. Girl children and adolescent girls are often vulnerable to sexual abuse by older men and family members, placing them at risk of physical and psychological harm and unwanted and early pregnancy. Some cultural or traditional practices such as female genital mutilation also carry a high risk of death and disability;

(c) Psychosocial factors that vary between women and men include depression in general and post-partum depression in particular as well as other psychological conditions, such as those that lead to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia;

(d) While lack of respect for the confidentiality of patients will affect both men and women, it may deter women from seeking advice and treatment and thereby adversely affect their health and well-being. Women will be less willing, for that reason, to seek medical care for diseases of the genital tract, for contraception or for incomplete abortion and in cases where they have suffered sexual or physical violence.

13. The duty of States parties to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health-care services, information and education implies an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil women's rights to health care. States parties have the responsibility to ensure that legislation and executive action and policy comply with these three obligations. They must also put in place a system that ensures effective judicial action. Failure to do so will constitute a violation of article 12.

14. The obligation to respect rights requires States parties to refrain from obstructing action taken by women in pursuit of their health goals. States parties should report on how public and private health-care providers meet their duties to respect women's rights to have access to health care. For example, States parties should not restrict women's access to health services or to the clinics that provide those services on the ground that women do not have the authorization of

husbands, partners, parents or health authorities, because they are unmarried[1] or because they are women. Other barriers to women's access to appropriate health care include laws that criminalize medical procedures only needed by women and that punish women who undergo those procedures.

15. The obligation to protect rights relating to women's health requires States parties, their agents and officials to take action to prevent and impose sanctions for violations of rights by private persons and organizations. Since gender-based violence is a critical health issue for women, States parties should ensure:

(a) The enactment and effective enforcement of laws and the formulation of policies, including health-care protocols and hospital procedures to address violence against women and sexual abuse of girl children and the provision of appropriate health services;

(b) Gender-sensitive training to enable health-care workers to detect and manage the health consequences of gender-based violence;

(c) Fair and protective procedures for hearing complaints and imposing appropriate sanctions on health-care professionals guilty of sexual abuse of women patients;

(d) The enactment and effective enforcement of laws that prohibit female genital mutilation and marriage of girl children.

16. States parties should ensure that adequate protection and health services, including trauma treatment and counselling, are provided for women in especially difficult circumstances, such as those trapped in situations of armed conflict and women refugees.

17. The duty to fulfil rights places an obligation on States parties to take appropriate legislative, judicial, administrative, budgetary, economic and other measures to the maximum extent of their available resources to ensure that women realize their rights to health care. Studies such as those that emphasize the high maternal mortality and morbidity rates worldwide and the large numbers of couples who would like to limit their family size but lack access to or do not use any form of contraception provide an important indication for States parties of possible breaches of their duties to ensure women's access to health care. The Committee asks States parties to report on what they have done to address the magnitude of women's ill-health, in particular when it arises from preventable conditions, such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The Committee is concerned about the growing evidence that States are relinquishing these obligations as they transfer State health functions to private agencies. States parties cannot absolve themselves of responsibility in these areas by delegating or transferring these powers to private sector agencies. States parties should therefore report on what they have done to organize governmental processes and all structures through which public power is exercised to promote and protect women's health. They should include information on positive measures taken to curb violations of women's rights by third parties and to protect their health and the measures they have taken to ensure the provision of such services.

18. The issues of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are central to the rights of women and adolescent girls to sexual health. Adolescent girls and women in many countries lack adequate access to information and services necessary to ensure sexual health. As a consequence of unequal power relations based on gender, women and adolescent girls are often unable to refuse sex or insist on safe and responsible sex practices. Harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, polygamy, as well as marital rape, may also expose girls and women to the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Women in prostitution are also particularly vulnerable to these diseases. States parties should ensure, without prejudice or discrimination, the right to sexual health information, education and services for all women and girls, including those who have been trafficked, even if they are not legally resident in the country. In particular, States parties should ensure the rights of female and male adolescents to sexual and reproductive health education by properly trained personnel in specially designed programmes that respect their right to privacy and confidentiality.

19. In their reports, States parties should identify the test by which they assess whether women have access to health care on a basis of equality of men and women in order to demonstrate compliance with article 12. In applying these tests, States parties should bear in mind the provisions of article 1 of the Convention. Reports should therefore include comments on the impact that health policies, procedures, laws and protocols have on women when compared with men.

20. Women have the right to be fully informed, by properly trained personnel, of their options in agreeing to treatment or research, including likely benefits and potential adverse effects of proposed procedures and available alternatives.

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[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/49/38), chap. I, sect. A, General recommendation 21, para. 29.

21. States parties should report on measures taken to eliminate barriers that women face in access to health-care services and what measures they have taken to ensure women timely and affordable access to such services. Barriers include requirements or conditions that prejudice women's access, such as high fees for health-care services, the requirement for preliminary authorization by spouse, parent or hospital authorities, distance from health facilities and the absence of convenient and affordable public transport.

22. States parties should also report on measures taken to ensure access to quality health-care services, for example, by making them acceptable to women. Acceptable services are those that are delivered in a way that ensures that a woman gives her fully informed consent, respects her dignity, guarantees her confidentiality and is sensitive to her needs and perspectives. States parties should not permit forms of coercion, such as non-consensual sterilization, mandatory testing for sexually transmitted diseases or mandatory pregnancy testing as a condition of employment that violate women's rights to informed consent and dignity.

23. In their reports, States parties should state what measures they have taken to ensure timely access to the range of services that are related to family planning, in particular, and to sexual and reproductive health in general. Particular attention should be paid to the health education of adolescents, including information and counselling on all methods of family planning.[2]

24. The Committee is concerned about the conditions of health-care services for older women, not only because women often live longer than men and are more likely than men to suffer from disabling and degenerative chronic diseases, such as osteoporosis and dementia, but because they often have the responsibility for their ageing spouses. Therefore, States parties should take appropriate measures to ensure the access of older women to health services that address the handicaps and disabilities associated with ageing.

25. Women with disabilities, of all ages, often have difficulty with physical access to health services. Women with mental disabilities are particularly vulnerable, while there is limited understanding, in general, of the broad range of risks to mental health to which women are disproportionately susceptible as a result of gender discrimination, violence, poverty, armed conflict, dislocation and other forms of social deprivation. States parties should take appropriate measures to ensure that health services are sensitive to the needs of women with disabilities and are respectful of their human rights and dignity.

Article 12 (2)

26. Reports should also include what measures States parties have taken to ensure women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period. Information on the rates at which these measures have reduced maternal mortality and morbidity in their countries, in general, and in vulnerable groups, regions and communities, in particular, should also be included.

27. States parties should include in their reports how they supply free services where necessary to ensure safe pregnancies, childbirth and post-partum periods for women. Many women are at risk of death or disability from pregnancy-related causes because they lack the funds to obtain or access the necessary services, which include ante-natal, maternity and post-natal services. The Committee notes that it is the duty of States parties to ensure women's right to safe motherhood and emergency obstetric services and they should allocate to these services the maximum extent of available resources.

Other relevant articles in the Convention

28. When reporting on measures taken to comply with article 12, States parties are urged to recognize its interconnection with other articles in the Convention that have a bearing on women's health. Those articles include article 5 (b), which requires States parties to ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function; article 10, which requires States parties to ensure equal access to education, thus enabling women to access health care more readily and reducing female student drop-out rates, which are often a result of premature pregnancy; article 10 (h), which requires that States parties provide to women and girls access to specific educational information to help ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning; article 11, which is concerned, in part, with the protection of women's health and safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the reproductive function, special protection from harmful types of work during pregnancy and with the provision of paid maternity leave; article 14, paragraph 2 (b), which requires States parties to ensure access for rural women to adequate health-care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning, and (h), which obliges States parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure adequate

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[2] Health education for adolescents should further address, *inter alia*, gender equality, violence, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive and sexual health rights.

living conditions, particularly housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications, all of which are critical for the prevention of disease and the promotion of good health care; and article 16, paragraph 1 (e), which requires States parties to ensure that women have the same rights as men to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise those rights. Article 16, paragraph 2 proscribes the betrothal and marriage of children, an important factor in preventing the physical and emotional harm which arise from early childbirth.

Recommendations for government action

29. States parties should implement a comprehensive national strategy to promote women's health throughout their lifespan. This will include interventions aimed at both the prevention and treatment of diseases and conditions affecting women, as well as responding to violence against women, and will ensure universal access for all women to a full range of high-quality and affordable health care, including sexual and reproductive health services.

30. States parties should allocate adequate budgetary, human and administrative resources to ensure that women's health receives a share of the overall health budget comparable with that for men's health, taking into account their different health needs.

31. States parties should also, in particular:

(a) Place a gender perspective at the centre of all policies and programmes affecting women's health and should involve women in the planning, implementation and monitoring of such policies and programmes and in the provision of health services to women;

(b) Ensure the removal of all barriers to women's access to health services, education and information, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health, and, in particular, allocate resources for programmes directed at adolescents for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;

(c) Prioritize the prevention of unwanted pregnancy through family planning and sex education and reduce maternal mortality rates through safe motherhood services and prenatal assistance. When possible, legislation criminalizing abortion should be amended, in order to withdraw punitive measures imposed on women who undergo abortion;

(d) Monitor the provision of health services to women by public, non-governmental and private organizations, to ensure equal access and quality of care;

(e) Require all health services to be consistent with the human rights of women, including the rights to autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and choice;

(f) Ensure that the training curricula of health workers includes comprehensive, mandatory, gender-sensitive courses on women's health and human rights, in particular gender-based violence.

B. Decisions

Decision 20/I
Non-governmental organizations

Recalling its decisions 18/I and 18/II, adopted at its eighteenth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations should be invited to provide country-specific information on States parties whose reports are before the Committee in an informal meeting of the Working Group of the Whole.

Chapter II
Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. On 5 February 1999, the closing date of the twentieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 163 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex I. A list of States parties which have accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention is contained in annex II.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its twentieth session at United Nations Headquarters from 19 January to 5 February 1999. The Committee held 21 plenary meetings (404th-424th), and its working groups held 16 meetings. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex III, section A.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Salma Khan (Bangladesh), who had been elected at the sixteenth session of the Committee in January 1997.

5. Speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women welcomed the members of the Committee to the twentieth session and congratulated the five new Committee members who had been elected at the tenth meeting of States parties in February 1998 and the four members who had been re-elected at that meeting.

6. The Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women also welcomed members of the Committee, including the newly elected members, and congratulated those who had been elected by the Committee as its officers. She said that the twentieth session was taking place at the beginning of the year during which the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention would occur, and suggested that the Committee might wish to reflect on ways to commemorate that important anniversary. She added that 1999 also marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7. The Special Adviser indicated that several of the activities of the Division for the Advancement of Women since the nineteenth session had contributed to the growing visibility of the Convention and the Committee. Those included the preparation of a study analysing what the various treaty bodies had done and should do to integrate a gender perspective into their work, which included recommendations aimed at increasing cooperation between the Committee and other treaty bodies.

8. From 29 September to 2 October 1998, the Division, in collaboration with WHO, UNFPA, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Tunisian Ministry of Women and Family, convened an expert group meeting in Tunisia on women and health. In addition to forming part of the preparations for the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which would consider the critical area of women and health, the conclusions of the meeting were relevant to the Committee's ongoing work on its general recommendation on women and health.

9. On behalf of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, the Division organized a workshop on a rights-based approach to women's advancement and empowerment and gender equality. An important focus of the workshop, which sought to review and clarify the rights-based approach to gender equality and its implications for policy and operations by bilateral and multilateral entities, was the value of the Convention as a tool for rights-based programming.

10. With the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), International Women's Rights Action Watch and Save the Children, the Division organized an expert consultation on violence in families, which was attended by several members of the Committee. The consultation was followed by a half-day dialogue among several members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, during which proposed joint strategies to address family violence were addressed.

11. The Special Adviser informed the Committee that in its resolution 53/118 of 9 December 1998, the General Assembly had urged States to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. The Assembly emphasized the importance of full compliance by States parties with their obligations under the Convention, urged States parties to withdraw or limit any reservations they had lodged to the Convention and invited States parties to give due consideration to the statement regarding reservations to the Convention adopted by the Committee to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Assembly commended the Committee on its efforts to contribute to the effective implementation of the Convention and for reducing the backlog of reports, including through improved internal methods of work. It encouraged strengthened coordination between the Committee and other human rights treaty bodies and invited the Committee to draw up joint general comments with other treaty bodies, within their respective mandates, on the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights.

12. The Special Adviser informed the Committee that in December 1998 Djibouti had become the one hundred sixty-third State party to the Convention. She noted that although the number of States parties to the Convention was gratifying, imaginative strategies and concerted efforts were required to reach the target of universal ratification by 2000 established by the Beijing Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. In that regard, she indicated that at their tenth meeting, the persons chairing the human

rights treaty bodies had recommended the development of a comprehensive action programme to promote universal ratification of the six core human rights treaties.

C. Attendance

13. All members of the Committee attended the twentieth session, with the exception of Carlota Bustelo, Silvia Cartwright and Kongit Sinegiorgis. Anne Lise Ryel attended from 25 January to 3 February 1999; Ahoua Ouedraogo attended from 19 to 29 January 1999; Rosario Manalo attended from 19 January to 2 February 1999; and Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini attended from 19 January to 2 February 1999.

14. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating their terms of office, is contained in annex IV.

D. Solemn declaration

15. At the opening of the twentieth session, before assuming their functions, the newly elected members, Charlotte Abaka (Ghana), Ivanka Corti (Italy), Feng Cui (China), Naela Gabr (Egypt), Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka), Rosalyn Hazelle (Saint Kitts and Nevis), Rosario Manalo (Philippines), Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini (South Africa), Zelmira Regazzoli (Argentina), Carmel Shalev (Israel) and Chikako Taya (Japan), made the solemn declaration as provided for under rule 10 of the rules of procedure of the Committee.

E. Election of officers

16. At its 404th meeting, on 19 January 1999, the Committee elected the following officers for a term of two years (1999-2000) by acclamation, in accordance with article 19 of the Convention and rules 13 and 14 of the Committee's rules of procedure: Aída González Martínez (Mexico), Chairperson; Yung-Chung Kim (Republic of Korea), Ahoua Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany), Vice-Chairpersons; and Ayse Feride Acar (Turkey), Rapporteur.

F. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

17. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/1999/I/1) at its 404th meeting, on 19 January 1999. The agenda as adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Solemn declaration by the new members of the Committee.
3. Election of officers.
4. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
5. Report of the Chairperson on the activities undertaken between the nineteenth and twentieth sessions of the Committee.
6. Consideration of the reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
8. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
9. Provisional agenda for the twenty-first session.
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twentieth session.

G. Report of the pre-session working group

18. The Committee had decided, at its ninth session,[3] to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session.

19. The following four members, representing different regional groups, participated in the working group: Emna Aouij (Africa), Ivanka Corti (Europe), Yolanda Ferrer Gomez (Latin America and the Caribbean) and Salma Khan (Asia and the Pacific).

20. The working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the reports of four States parties, namely China, Colombia, Greece and Thailand.

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[3] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38* and corrigendum (A/45/38 and Corr.1), paras. 28-31.

21. At the 404th meeting, on 19 January 1999, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group introduced the report of the group (CEDAW/C/1999/I/CRP.1 and Add.1-4).

H. Composition and organization of work of the working groups

22. At its 404th meeting, on 19 January 1999, the Committee agreed on the composition of its two standing working groups: Working Group I, to consider ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, and Working Group II, to consider ways and means of implementing article 21 of the Convention.

23. Working Group I was composed of the following members of the Committee: Ayse Feride Acar, Emna Aouij, Ivanka Corti, Feng Cui, Yolanda Ferrer Gomez, Salma Khan, Yung-Chung Kim, Carmel Shalev, Chikako Taya, Hanna Beate Schopp-Schilling and Zelmira Regazzoli.

24. Working Group II was composed of the following members of the Committee: Charlotte Abaka, Rosalyn Hazelle, Naela Gabr, Savitri Goonesekere, Rosario Manalo, Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini and Ahoua Ouedraogo.

25. The specific issues addressed by Working Groups I and II were the following:

(a) **Working Group I.** Working methods of the pre-session working group, including the number of issues and questions, analysis provided by the Secretariat and implications of new timing; receipt of reports by experts; relationship between the Committee and other United Nations agencies; matters raised at the tenth meeting of the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies; universal ratification; focused periodic reports; comments of the Committee on the preliminary statement of Alain Pellet, Rapporteur of the International Law Commission, on reservations; gender perspectives in the work of the United Nations treaty bodies; input into the work of the expert member of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on reservations; the Committee's report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action prepared for the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women; the Committee's rules of procedure; reports to be considered at the twenty-first, twenty-second and twenty-third sessions of the Committee; and the role of non-governmental organizations;

(b) **Working Group II.** Draft general recommendation on article 12; the Committee's long-term programme of work with regard to general recommendations; publicity for the Committee and the Convention; and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.

Chapter III

Report of the Chairperson on the activities undertaken between the nineteenth and twentieth sessions of the Committee

26. Salma Khan, the outgoing Chairperson of the Committee, welcomed all the Committee members to the twentieth session. She extended her congratulations to the new members elected at the tenth meeting of States parties, stating that they had joined the human rights treaty body responsible for promoting and defending the rights of half of humanity.

27. Ms. Khan indicated that during the inter-sessional period, she had sought to maintain regular contact with the experts, and that had facilitated her work and contributed to the achievement of their common goals.

28. In regard to her activities between the nineteenth and twentieth sessions of the Committee, Ms. Khan reported that she had attended several South Asian regional meetings to commemorate the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, including a meeting held at Kathmandu, which had sought to develop a regional strategy for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to identify challenges and gaps in that regard.

29. Ms. Khan indicated that she had participated in a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris from 14 to 16 September 1998. Her statement at that event highlighted the fact that the Declaration had established the equal rights of women and men, a principle elaborated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

30. Reporting on her attendance at the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, Ms. Khan noted that several Governments had commended the work of the Committee and its efforts to reinforce the implementation mechanisms of the Convention. Several had welcomed the development of an optional protocol and the statement on reservations adopted at the nineteenth session of the Committee as a contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

31. Ms. Khan underlined the Committee's growing links with specialized agencies and other bodies of the United

Nations and drew attention to the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, to develop a partnership between her office and the Committee. In this regard, Ms. Khan noted that the High Commissioner had sought inputs from the Committee prior to her recent mission to China and that Mrs. Robinson had provided her with a detailed account of her mission, highlighting progress achieved and challenges in a letter dated 3 December 1998.

32. Ms. Khan reminded the Committee that 18 December 1999 would mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, while 20 November 1999 would mark the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She noted that those anniversaries would provide opportunities to emphasize the importance of international normative instruments in the establishment of full and equal rights for women and girl children.

33. Ms. Khan noted that although the majority of Member States had subscribed to the Convention, the goal of universal ratification set by the Beijing Platform for Action had yet to be reached. On behalf of the Committee, she had written to those countries that had not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention, while the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women had also written to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), requesting him to encourage Governments to ratify or accede to the Convention. Ms. Khan indicated that she had also requested a number of non-governmental organizations to encourage ratification. As a result of those efforts, several States, including Djibouti, had accepted the Convention.

34. In concluding her remarks, Ms. Khan outlined progress in the Committee's work during the two years of her chairpersonship. She noted that there had been a steady increase in ratification and accession and that the Committee was now meeting twice yearly. It had reviewed the reports of 35 States parties over the period, and positive steps towards *de jure* equality of women had been made. Some States parties had modified or withdrawn their reservations to the Convention, and significant progress had been made in the elaboration of an optional complaints mechanism to the Convention. Working relationships had been established with specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations. She indicated, however, that still more progress was required before women would achieve de facto equality with men. Ms. Khan thanked the members of the Committee for their support during her chairpersonship and paid particular tribute to the outgoing bureau member. She congratulated Aída González Martínez, the incoming Chairperson, and the other members of the bureau on their election, and wished them well in their future work.

35. In the light of her participation in the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris from 14 to 16 September 1998, Ms. Khan had requested Ms. Abaka to attend the tenth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies.

36. In her report to the Committee, Ms. Abaka indicated that the chairpersons had expressed appreciation for the work of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, particularly with regard to reservations to human rights treaties and affirmative action. The chairpersons recommended that the expertise of treaty bodies should be drawn upon by the Subcommission with respect to these and future studies. Ms. Abaka noted that the chairpersons had taken note of the Committee's statement on reservations with appreciation.

37. Ms. Abaka indicated that the chairpersons had emphasized the importance of the work of the thematic rapporteurs and the need for close collaboration between them and the treaty bodies. She noted that she had expressed the Committee's disappointment that it had not benefited from the expertise of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and had reiterated this during the chairpersons' meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

38. The chairpersons had stressed the importance of publicity for the work of the human rights treaty bodies, and emphasized that concluding comments and observations and general recommendations, as well as other outputs of the treaty bodies, should be made widely known at the national, regional and subregional levels by the United Nations information offices. In addition, they stressed that regional human rights commissions should also be made aware of the work of treaty bodies.

Chapter IV

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

A. Introduction

39. At its twentieth session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of

the Convention: three initial reports; two combined second and third periodic reports; one third and fourth periodic reports; and one fourth periodic report.

40. As decided at its thirteenth session, in 1994, the Committee prepared concluding comments on each report considered. The Committee's concluding comments on the reports of States parties, as prepared by the members of the Committee, and a summary of the introductory presentation by the representatives of the States parties are provided below.

B. Consideration of reports of States parties

1. Initial reports

Algeria

41. The Committee considered the initial report of Algeria (CEDAW/C/DZA/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1) at its 406th, 407th and 412th meetings, on 21 and 26 January 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.406, 407 and 412).

(a) Introduction by the State party

42. In introducing the report, the representative of Algeria underlined that his country had submitted its initial report only two years after its accession to the Convention, despite the current difficult situation it was facing. That was an indication of the sincere commitment of the Government to human rights and to the advancement of women.

43. The representative noted that Algeria's second Constitution of 1976, proclaimed 13 years after independence, guaranteed for the first time equality before the law. The Constitution of 1989, revised in 1996, reinforced principles of universal human rights, such as freedom of speech and free elections. Article 123 also confirmed the primacy of all international treaties ratified by Algeria over national law, a decision confirmed by the Constitutional Council on 20 August 1998. All civil, penal, administrative and commercial codes conformed to the Constitution and the principles of equality between men and women. However, despite the rapid progress with regard to *de jure* equality, de facto equality had not been achieved because of stereotypical attitudes that existed in society.

44. A number of measures had been taken by public authorities as part of the overall policy on women, in particular after the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). A permanent committee had been established under the auspices of the Ministry of National Solidarity and Family; and to strengthen the national mechanisms for the advancement of women, a secretariat of State upgraded to a Ministry and headed by a woman Minister acted as a focal point for the advancement of women. The Council for the Preservation and Promotion of the Family and the National Women's Council were created in 1996 and 1997 respectively, to ensure the coherence of all policies for the advancement of women. As part of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Algeria had adopted a national action plan and recently presented a report on the many actions undertaken since the Fourth World Conference on Women.

45. The representative recalled that Algerian women had already played an active role in the struggle for independence, but stereotypical attitudes, exacerbated by illiteracy, were obstacles to achievement of equality with men. A great number of political parties and non-governmental organizations had emerged since the introduction of a pluralist democracy in 1984, but fundamentalist movements and terrorism threatened advances made, particularly where women were concerned.

46. The representative pointed out that education, which was free, had been decisive in women's emancipation, providing access to employment, medical and social services and breaking down stereotypical attitudes and social obstacles. Certain sectors of employment were now dominated by women, including the magistrature, education and health.

47. The representative noted that domestic violence against women was considered a severe crime by the Constitution and penal code. Many non-governmental organizations also existed to assist battered women. Several initiatives had been taken to care for victims of rape and abduction, including centres to treat women and children traumatized by terrorist violence.

48. The representative informed the Committee that progress had been achieved with regard to equality in political and public life at the national level, although only a few women had reached decision-making positions. Many women were active, including in leadership positions, in political parties, unions and non-governmental organizations. The reform of voting procedures in 1995, which limited voting by proxy to exceptional situations, returned the right to vote to many women whose guardian or husband had customarily voted on their behalf.

49. The economic crisis affecting Algeria since 1986 had resulted in a decline in jobs and had had a negative impact on the employment of women. Women's participation in the labour force was low and informal work at home was

increasing. However, the representative noted that under the current social security system women received specific benefits related to maternity and retirement, including 14 weeks of maternity leave at full pay.

50. Family planning services were an integral part of the health programme and had expanded since 1974. Today 99 per cent of women were aware of methods of family planning, and the fertility rate, in particular among the younger age groups, had been significantly reduced.

51. In concluding his presentation, the representative of Algeria emphasized that the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had to be viewed in the context of the political will to encourage the gradual emancipation of women. Accession to the Convention had raised a debate in the country and although accession was accompanied by reservations, it should be seen as a step towards social and normative developments leading to withdrawal of the reservations. In particular, as a result of the accession to the Convention, the Family Code of 1984 was currently being revised and suggested amendments, which could result in removal of reservations, had emerged, as a result both of claims by women's groups and of the evolution of Algerian society.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

52. The Committee congratulates the Government of Algeria on the excellent presentation of its initial report, which is in accordance with the Committee's guidelines. The fact that the Government of Algeria submitted its initial report only two years after it acceded to the Convention and notwithstanding the difficult circumstances the country is experiencing, testifies to its political will to improve the status of women and its interest in their emancipation.

53. The Committee congratulates the Government for the high level and large size of its delegation, headed by the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, which established a constructive, open and sincere dialogue with members of the Committee, and in its oral presentation gave additional specific and objective information as well as statistical data enabling the Committee to understand the *de jure* and de facto situation of Algerian women.

54. The Committee expresses its solidarity with the struggle of Algerian women against all forms of fundamentalism and terrorism. Notwithstanding the extreme violence they have endured, they have managed, with the help of a very active community organization, to put respect for the rights of women and revision of the Family Code high on the national political agenda.

Positive aspects

55. The Committee welcomes the willingness of the Government of Algeria to review reservations to the Convention in the light of the evolution of Algerian society.

56. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the 1996 Algerian Constitution, which gives international treaties, including the Convention, which have been ratified and gazetted, primacy over domestic law.

57. The Committee notes that the Algerian Constitution guarantees equality between men and women in all spheres of life.

58. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the ratification of the Convention has had a positive impact on the lives of Algerian women and Algerian society. Institutional measures, including the establishment of a National Women's Council, a Council for the Preservation and Promotion of the Family and a ministerial department responsible for national solidarity and the family, have also been taken by the Government. This department, which is headed by a woman, is the focal point for all activities undertaken in the areas of the advancement of women and family affairs. The Committee notes that the Government is also considering legal measures, including the amendment of the Family Code.

59. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the Algerian women's non-governmental organizations in raising public awareness and fostering the interest of the Government and legislators in women's issues. The invaluable contribution of women's non-governmental organizations to the elaboration of the Family Code is also commended.

60. The Committee notes with satisfaction that Algerian labour legislation contains specific provisions relating to maternity leave and breastfeeding breaks that protect women from discrimination because of their parental responsibilities.

61. The Committee recognizes the steps taken by the State party with respect to victims of terrorist violence through provision of treatment centres for victims, the establishment of a national intersectoral programme to address the needs of those traumatized by terrorist violence, as well as the provision of compensation for the beneficiaries of victims who have died, for persons who have suffered bodily and material injuries and for victims of accidents occurring within the context of terrorist violence. The Committee also notes the work of community organizations in providing psychological and other assistance for such victims.

62. The Committee welcomes the elimination of proxy votes which had enabled a husband to vote in place of his wife.

63. The Committee noted with satisfaction that women have access without *de jure* discrimination to public and political life and are well represented in these spheres. It notes with satisfaction the large number of women at all levels of the judiciary, and that more than a quarter of the judges are women.

64. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the numerous specific measures taken by the Government to give women equal access to education and training have been a decisive factor in the emancipation of women.

65. The Committee notes with satisfaction that women's health is identified as a priority in the country's health policies and programmes.

Factors impeding implementation of the Convention

66. The Committee notes that the emergence of fundamentalism and the terrorist violence that accompanies it have affected all layers of society, including women and children, and have impeded effective implementation of the Convention.

67. The Committee also notes that the reservations of the State party to articles 2, 9, paragraph 2, 15, paragraph 4, and 16 are obstacles to the Convention's full implementation.

68. The Committee notes that, although the Constitution guarantees the equality of men and women and provides that the Convention prevails over national legislation, the numerous discriminatory provisions of the Family Code and the persistence of prejudice and patriarchal practices conflict de facto with the principles of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

69. The Committee reiterates its concern at the reservations to the Convention entered by the State party.

70. The Committee urges the State party to expedite the steps necessary for withdrawal of its reservations.

71. The Committee is concerned by the State party's constant citing of religious principles and cultural specificities to justify why the status of women has not kept up with the overall advances of society.

72. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to ensure that religious and cultural patterns do not inhibit the development of women's position in Algerian society.

73. The Committee is concerned by the social constraints that exist within Algerian society which keep women in a lower status than men and are not conducive to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

74. The Committee urges the Government to continue its efforts to repeal inegalitarian laws in order to bring its legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention. The Committee also urges the Government, non-governmental organizations, intellectuals and the mass media to encourage enlightened attitudes and accelerate women's emancipation through publicity and public awareness campaigns.

75. The Committee notes with concern the persistence of cultural stereotypes and patriarchal values as well as polygamy, which violate women's rights.

76. Noting the Government's intention to introduce legislative changes to implement the Convention, the Committee recommends development and implementation of a legal literacy strategy and training for all levels of society in order to address discriminatory cultural norms and attitudes.

77. The Committee is deeply concerned by the large number of women murdered, raped, abducted and subjected to serious physical abuse by terrorist groups in recent years.

78. The Committee calls upon the Government to protect women in accordance with the provision of the Constitution that states that the State is responsible for the safety of persons and property. The Committee recommends that better care be taken of all women and girls who are victims of terrorist violence.

79. The Committee is concerned by the absence of legal texts that specifically protect women who are victims of domestic and sexual violence.

80. The Committee recommends to the Government that it take specific legislative and structural steps to shelter women from such attacks and provide women who are victims of violence with comfort, assistance, advice, guidance and information concerning legal redress. The Committee also recommends that education and awareness training on domestic and sexual violence be made available to police officers, judges, doctors and the mass media to make their intervention more effective.

81. The Committee is concerned by the situation of wives of disappeared persons who can neither legally prove that their husbands are dead, owing to the length and difficulty of the procedure, nor enjoy their status as married women. This results in human and material injuries to these women and their children.

82. The Committee calls upon the Government of Algeria to help this group of women and their families by simplifying, even on a temporary basis, the legal procedure for certification of death so that they can clarify their status, obtain custody of their children and legally dispose of property to which they are entitled.

83. The Committee is concerned by the fact that mothers cannot transmit their nationality to their children in the same way that fathers can. Citizenship is a fundamental right which men and women must be able to enjoy equally.

84. The Committee recommends the revision of legislation governing nationality in order to make it consistent with the provisions of the Convention.

85. Noting the significant progress that has been made in regard to women's education and the enrolment of girls in schools in rural and urban areas, the Committee is concerned that the reform of the Algerian educational system has not been completed.

86. The Committee recommends that the Algerian Government continue its revision of both curricula and textbooks to rid them of stereotypes and negative images of women in order to help change attitudes more quickly and to remove obstacles to equality. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women teachers and women's non-governmental organizations are consulted in the rewriting of textbooks.

87. The Committee is concerned at the low rate of participation of women in the workplace, which poses a major problem for women's economic independence.

88. The Committee recommends that article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention be implemented through temporary incentives with quantitative targets aimed at increasing women's employment in both the public and private sectors. The Committee recommends the creation of child-care centres and kindergartens in sufficient numbers to allow women to reconcile their family and professional responsibilities. The Committee also recommends that unemployed women be required to participate in traineeships and retraining programmes, including in non-traditional areas, and benefit from job-creation measures to a degree proportional to the unemployment rate for women.

89. The Committee is concerned that the information contained in the report on rural women and the benefits they obtained from rural development efforts was insufficient.

90. The Committee encourages the Government to pay due attention to the needs of rural women by reinforcing their active and participatory role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes that affect them, particularly in the areas of housing credit, income-generating projects and social security.

91. The Committee is seriously concerned by the fact that the Family Code still contains many discriminatory provisions which deny Algerian women their basic rights, such as free consent to marriage, equal rights to divorce, sharing of family and child-rearing responsibilities, shared child custody rights with fathers, the right to dignity and self-respect and, above all, the elimination of polygamy.

92. The Committee urges the Government to consider the proposed amendments that modify some of the provisions of the Family Code to be an initial step in the process that needs to be undertaken to harmonize the provisions of the Family Code with the text of the Convention and with the principle of equality that is set out in the Algerian Constitution.

93. The Committee requests the Government of Algeria to provide information addressing the concerns raised in these concluding comments in its next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

94. The Committee requests that its conclusions be broadly disseminated in Algeria to make the population of the country, and particularly those working in the civil service and in political circles, aware of the measures that have been taken to ensure women's actual equality and of the further measures that are needed in this regard. It also requests the Government of Algeria to continue to disseminate widely, especially to women's and human rights organizations, the text of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Kyrgyzstan

95. The Committee considered the initial report of Kyrgyzstan (CEDAW/C/KGZ/1) at its 408th, 409th and 413th meetings, on 22 and 27 January 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.408, 409 and 413).

(a) Introduction by the State party

96. In her introduction, the representative of Kyrgyzstan informed the Committee that the initial report had been prepared by a special commission established for that purpose that included governmental and legal officials. The report was also prepared through a process of consultation and participation with non-governmental organizations.

97. The representative described the political, economic and social conditions of the country since its declaration of

independence on 31 August 1991. She noted that the current situation was characterized by the transition to a market economy, which had had a negative impact on the situation of women. She highlighted increasing poverty among women, high rates of unemployment, the growth of all forms of violence against women, the decrease of women's participation in decision-making and the lack of equal rights and access to land and credit. She noted that the situation of rural women was exacerbated by limited infrastructure and markets for sale of agricultural products, an increase in domestic violence and difficult working conditions. The representative noted that among the positive factors was the high level of women's education.

98. The representative described the measures and initiatives that had been undertaken by the Government to guarantee the equal rights of women and to ensure their advancement. Twenty-two international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, had been adopted, and the central principles and standards of international law had been reflected in domestic legislation. The curricula of many universities and schools included human rights education.

99. The representative described the role and functions of the newly established Gender Analysis Council. The Council had analysed six laws from a gender perspective and had plans to review more than 20 laws and regulations. As a result of the Council's work, the National Gender Policy Council had been created in the office of the President in July 1998. The Council would monitor the national implementation of international human rights treaties and agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

100. To accelerate implementation of the Convention, concrete national programmes relating to the economy, education, health care and poverty that are aimed at the advancement of women and the elimination of *de jure* and de facto discrimination against women had been designed and were being implemented.

101. The representative noted that the Fourth World Conference on Women had had a catalytic role in Kyrgyzstan and had been an important factor in the ratification of the Convention. The impact of the Beijing Platform for Action had been positive, and the Government was committed to its implementation. She described the national programme "Ayalzat" for 1996-2000, which constituted the national action plan for the implementation of the Platform and incorporated 11 critical areas of concern as the priorities for women's advancement. She noted that the programme was financed from the national budget.

102. The representative noted that by presidential decree, 1996 had been proclaimed women's year, and in March of that year the State Commission for the Family, Women and Youth had been established. She indicated that, in coordination with regional affiliates, the Commission was responsible for implementing the national action plan in all six regions of the country.

103. The representative indicated that her Government was paying increased attention to collaboration with non-governmental organizations in the elimination of discrimination against women. The representative drew attention to the contribution of non-governmental organizations in various contexts, particularly with regard to violence against women, and acknowledged their important role in establishing crisis centres in all regions of the country.

104. The representative noted the decreasing number of women in decision-making positions, and indicated that there was debate in relation to the reinstitution of quotas that had existed in the past.

105. The representative concluded with an analysis of experiences and proposals for measures and initiatives to promote the advancement of women in all sectors.

(b) Concluding comments by the Committee

Introduction

106. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Kyrgyzstan for submitting, in a timely manner, a well-structured and comprehensive initial report. It commends the Government on its comprehensive oral presentation and for the replies to the questions posed by the Committee.

107. The Committee appreciates the high-level delegation, headed by the chairperson of the State Commission for the Family, Women and Youth, which presented the report. It notes that the report described measures taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

108. The Committee commends Kyrgyzstan for ratifying a large number of international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was ratified, without reservations, during a difficult time of transition to a market economy and of rapid social and political change.

Positive aspects

109. The Committee commends the fact that the texts of the treaties ratified by Kyrgyzstan have been translated into the Kyrgyz language and other languages used in Kyrgyzstan,

including Russian and Uzbek. In this context, the Committee expresses its appreciation of the Government's will to implement the Convention. The Committee also commends Kyrgyzstan for integrating the provisions of the ratified treaties into its basic domestic laws, including the criminal code, the civil code, the labour code and the law on protecting consumers' rights. It is also pleased to learn that there are plans to review other laws from a gender perspective.

110. The Committee appreciates the fact that human rights are part of the curriculum of many universities and schools.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

111. The Committee views the prevailing conditions of poverty and unemployment as well as the negative effects of rapid social and political change on women to be major impediments to the implementation of the Convention.

112. The persistence of a strong patriarchal culture, which emphasizes traditional roles of women and men, is also seen as a hindrance to the implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

113. The Committee is concerned at the lack of understanding of discrimination against women as a multi-faceted phenomenon that entails indirect and unintentional as well as direct and intentional discrimination. This understanding is a sine qua non of comprehensive analyses and for policy analysis for the effective elimination of discrimination against women in both *de jure* and de facto terms.

114. The Committee recommends that the principle of the equality guaranteed by law should also refer to non-discrimination on the grounds of sex. It also recommends the introduction of a procedure for enforcing rights through effective judicial and other means. Policies, including educational, mass media and awareness-raising campaigns should also be introduced and efforts should be directed at countering both intentional and unintentional discrimination.

115. The Committee expresses concern with regard to the extent and nature of the power of the national machinery, as well as the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between the State Commission and the Ministry. It also notes the inadequacy of the existing budget and personnel for the advancement of women.

116. The Committee recommends enhancing the national machinery by clarifying its functions and the relations between its various organs and the organs of Government, as well as through the allocation of greater budgetary and human resources so as to ensure its effective functioning at the national and regional levels.

117. The Committee also recommends that all national programmes to promote the advancement of women include mechanisms for the assessment of the outcomes of their implementation and the evaluation of their effectiveness and the extent of their outreach.

118. The Committee expresses concern that no efforts have been made to use temporary special measures as envisaged in article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to improve the situation of women in various areas; and to ensure women's participation in decision-making bodies and women's employment in non-traditional areas.

119. The Committee recommends the introduction of a broad range of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, including quotas, to improve the representation of women in politics and at all levels of decision-making and in non-traditional fields of employment.

120. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of patriarchal culture and the continuing emphasis on the traditional roles of women exclusively as mothers and wives. The Committee notes with particular concern that the initial report, in referring to the role of man as the breadwinner, may legitimize existing stereotypes.

121. The Committee urges the Government to introduce a range of measures, including comprehensive public education and mass media campaigns, to eliminate traditional stereotypes [illegible] the roles of men and women.

122. The Committee is alarmed at the increase in all forms of violence against women, including gang rape. The Committee is also concerned that the emphasis of the initial report is on sexual violence rather than on gender-based violence as an infringement of the right to personal security.

123. The Committee recommends that all forms of gender-based violence be a focus of serious concern. It recommends the enhancement of comprehensive measures to prevent violence and to support women victims, including gender-sensitization and the training of law enforcement officials. It recommends the collection of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data and information on the issue of violence against women. In the light of the linkage of violence with poverty, the Committee recommends the introduction of measures aimed at improving the economic status of women, including retraining for income-generating occupations.

124. The Committee recommends, in both urban and rural areas, the expansion of the network of crisis centres and the

establishment of consultative services to provide necessary medical assistance to women victims of violence.

125. The Committee is concerned about the increase in alcoholism and drug addiction, to the extent that these are causes of health problems, as well as violence against women everywhere.

126. The Committee recommends that programmes be put in place to create awareness about the negative impact of alcoholism and drug addiction on individuals and on society in general. It also recommends the introduction of rehabilitation programmes for victims of such addictions.

127. The Committee is concerned that lesbianism is classified as a sexual offence in the Penal Code.

128. The Committee recommends that lesbianism be reconceptualized as a sexual orientation and that penalties for its practice be abolished.

129. The Committee is concerned about the increase in prostitution and the trafficking of women, which it views as being related to poverty, lack of employment and lack of effective national measures to suppress the growth of these practices.

130. The Committee recommends that increased efforts in cooperation with other countries be taken to arrest and punish perpetrators of trafficking. It also recommends that domestic measures be launched to combat the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes on women and to provide job opportunities and training to vulnerable women.

131. The Committee is concerned at the economic situation of women, characterized by an increase in the number of women in poverty and among the unemployed.

132. The Committee recommends that the gender dimension of poverty be considered in the design and implementation of all policies and programmes aimed at the elimination of poverty.

133. The Committee is concerned about the conditions of work and job security of the growing number of women who are entering the informal sector as agents in what is referred to as the "women's suitcase economy" or "women's shuttle economy".

134. The Committee recommends the introduction of comprehensive measures aimed at the improvement of women's economic status, particularly through a review of the taxation legislation relating to small businesses and the expansion of micro-credit programmes involving commercial and agricultural banks in order to ensure gainful and secure employment for women. It also recommends that steps be taken to integrate women into all sectors of the national economy.

135. The Committee recommends that international cooperation be sought to promote the economic position of women.

136. The Committee is concerned at the situation of women's health, in particular the increase in the incidence of maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as the high rates of infant mortality and the use of abortion as a method of contraception.

137. The Committee recommends the introduction of comprehensive family-planning programmes based on the right to reproductive choice, as well as measures to ensure that abortion is not perceived as a method of contraception.

138. The Committee notes with concern that although polygamy is illegal, it is nonetheless practised in some regions without legal or social sanctions.

139. The Committee recommends that effective measures be taken with respect to the implementation of existing laws, the improvement of women's economic situation and the implementation of public education programmes to change traditional values supportive of polygamy in order to eradicate this practice altogether.

140. The Committee recommends that effective participation of non-governmental organizations be secured in the preparation of the next report of Kyrgyzstan and that the report be made widely available to the community of non-governmental organizations.

141. The Committee requests the Government of Kyrgyzstan to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in the next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

142. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Kyrgyzstan of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Kyrgyzstan, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps to be taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, in particular, to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Liechtenstein

143. The Committee considered the initial report of Liechtenstein (CEDAW/C/LIE/1) at its 410th, 411th and

414th meetings, on 25 and 27 January 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.410, 411 and 414).

(a) Introduction by the State party

144. In introducing the report, the representative of Liechtenstein noted that *de jure* equality between women and men in Liechtenstein had been achieved later than in many other countries. In 1992, a constitutional amendment stating that women and men had equal rights provided the basis for a 1996 law that guaranteed gender equality.

145. The representative indicated that since 1996 the focus of the Government had been on achieving de facto equality between women and men in all spheres of life. Implementation of legal and other measures in compliance with the Convention formed part of an overall strategy that also incorporated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Liechtenstein had submitted to the United Nations the national action plan for the implementation of the Platform and had ratified several regional and international human rights treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Liechtenstein had also accepted the communications procedures of the first optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and strongly supported the adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

146. The representative indicated that there had been an increase in the proportion of women represented at all levels of education, but that at the tertiary level male students still constituted two thirds of all students. Male students also predominated in such disciplines as law and economics and in technical studies, including computer studies. Female students were well represented in the humanities.

147. The representative reported that while there had been an increase in the number of women in positions of leadership in communes and commissions since acquiring the right to vote in 1984, women were still under-represented at all levels of governance. She noted that although there was no system of quotas, the Government remained committed to achieving equal representation of women in senior leadership positions.

148. The representative informed the Committee that non-governmental organizations, many of which received financial support from the Government, played an active role in measures to promote the advancement of women. They were involved in such activities as the facilitation of networking and the provision of day-care centres for children as well as a women's shelter for battered women and children.

149. The representative noted that the Government's focus was now on the achievement of de facto equality for women through a variety of programmes. These had included a 1997 exhibition on the theme: "Girls with a head on their shoulders get down to work", which had sought to motivate girls to expand their choice of occupations. Currently, the educational curriculum was being revised to incorporate the principle of equality and the practical involvement of women and men in the achievement of that principle.

150. The representative indicated that the proposed equal rights act would prohibit discrimination at the workplace, provide protection against retaliatory dismissal and the right to bring legal claims, including class action complaints, and reduce the burden of proof. The proposed act would also provide the Government with a legal basis to give financial support to companies in order to enable them to enact positive measures for the promotion of women at the workplace.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

151. The Committee commends the Government of Liechtenstein for the timely submission of its initial report, one year after its accession to the Convention. It welcomes the report, especially the well-structured and informative oral update, which provided frank and clear information on the situation of women. Together with the exhaustive replies provided to the Committee's numerous questions, the presentation provided a comprehensive view of the efforts undertaken by the Government in order to achieve full compliance with its obligations under the Convention.

152. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Liechtenstein for its high-level delegation, headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is also the Minister for Family Affairs and Equality between Men and Women. This enabled the Committee to obtain a realistic picture of the progress made and of challenges that lay ahead in the achievement of equal rights of women and men.

Positive aspects

153. The Committee welcomes the Government's withdrawal of its reservation to the Convention.

154. The Committee notes with satisfaction the establishment of a national machinery to implement the Convention and to follow up and implement the

commitments of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

155. The Committee commends Liechtenstein on its accession to numerous regional and international human rights instruments.

156. The Committee also commends Liechtenstein for its rapid progress in removing discriminatory laws.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

157. The Committee notes that the persistence of deep-seated social and cultural attitudes which impede the implementation of the Convention and inhibit the attainment of de facto equality.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

158. The Committee expresses concern that patriarchal patterns of behaviour persist and thereby compromise *de jure* equality between women and men that has been achieved.

159. The Committee expresses deep concern at the persistence of de facto inequality between women and men, which is particularly reflected in the low participation of women in public life and decision-making, in the economy and in their under-representation in tertiary education.

160. The Committee urges the Government to ensure that the proposed equality rights act not only covers working life, but extends to all spheres of life, in order to accelerate equality in both public and private life.

161. The Committee urges the Government to improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex in order to provide strong factual information on the situation of women in all areas covered by the Convention, and on the progress made in its implementation over time. Such information will provide the basis for the design of appropriate policies and programmes to accelerate the achievement of equality.

162. The Committee is concerned about the situation of women in employment and work. It expresses its concern about the highly segregated labour market, and the concentration of women in low-paid employment and part-time work.

163. The Committee recommends that the Government avail itself of the existing body of research and practice on equal pay for work of equal and comparable value in order to overcome pay inequity. The Committee also recommends that the Government review the existing system of social security, particularly with regard to marginal part-time work and the law on parental leave, with a view to ensuring that the system, including in its effects, does not discriminate against women.

164. While commending the initiative of the Government to subsidize the employment of women in private enterprises, the Committee notes the inadequacy of measures, including temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men and affirmative action to address the situation of women in all areas.

165. The Committee urges the Government to implement temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention in order to accelerate the advancement of women in all areas. Temporary special measures to promote women have been successful in addressing structural discrimination against women in politics and employment and in accelerating de facto equality for women.

166. The Committee encourages the Government to realize gender equality and requests that it include in its next report detailed information on the impact of policies and programmes aimed at implementing the Convention and achieving gender equality.

167. The Committee expresses serious concern regarding the issue of violence against women, in particular the lack of comprehensive information on its incidence.

168. The Committee recommends that the Government review its policies and measures with regard to violence against women, taking into consideration general recommendation 19 on violence against women. It also recommends that a review be made of the law relating to prostitution to ensure that prostitutes are not penalized.

169. The Committee notes the high number of children born out of wedlock. It recommends the development of studies and indicators to determine the impact of laws and policies on women, since linkages between the strict anti-abortion law and the high incidence of children born out of wedlock might be revealed. The Committee urges the Government to institute measures to prevent single mothers from facing the financial and social risks of poverty.

170. The Committee requests the Government of Liechtenstein to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

171. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Liechtenstein of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Liechtenstein, and in particular its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto

gender equality and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the conventions, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

2. Combined second and third periodic reports

Greece

172. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Greece (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3) at its 415th and 416th meetings, on 28 January 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.415 and 416).

(a) Introduction by the State party

173. The representative of Greece noted that the principle of gender equality had been established in Greece by the 1975 Constitution. The legislative and other measures adopted since then, including relevant directives of the European Union, to consolidate the elimination of discrimination against women in all sectors, had brought about significant changes in the status of women and their increased presence in all sectors. The equality policies adopted since 1994 had been aimed at further reducing inequalities, eradicating their causes and changing existing concepts and attitudes regarding the role of women and men in the family, at work and in politics and social life. Emphasis was also placed on the development of support mechanisms and structures to enhance implementation of such measures. As a sector of the Ministry of the Presidency, the General Secretariat for Equality, established in 1985, was the State agency responsible for equality issues.

174. The representative noted that notwithstanding the positive impact of those measures, gender inequalities continued to exist. The representative then reviewed the most important actions taken in favour of gender equality. She noted that the legislative framework in Greece was considered to be one of the most advanced and progressive in the world. Among recent legislative changes, she highlighted the revision of family law and new legislation concerning women's access to continuing education, vocational training and employment and labour relations. Enrolment in elementary and high school education was obligatory in Greece, and therefore illiteracy rates, in all parts of the country, had decreased significantly in the past decade.

175. The representative identified the elimination of violence against women and women's equal and active participation in all socio-economic development policies as the highest priorities for the General Secretariat for Equality for the period 1997-2000. Owing to a lack of adequate data, no clear picture on the extent and forms of violence against women existed. Among new actions taken to address the problem was the establishment of an expert committee to develop recommendations on further legislation, measures and strategies. The Research Centre for Equality Matters was conducting nationwide research on violence against women. Forced prostitution and trafficking had also become a serious problem in Greece.

176. The changes occurring in the economic and social system in recent years had particular consequences for women. The achievement of equal opportunities for women and the integration of women into the labour market required that attention be paid not only to quantitative but also to qualitative aspects in order to ensure the economic and social cohesion of the country. The General Secretariat for Equality promoted the adoption of an action plan for 1998-2000, which had as its centrepiece the mainstreaming of the equal opportunities policy into all governmental policies.

177. The representative noted the positive trends in women's participation in the labour market, including the increased participation of women in the labour force, an increase in women's economic activity rate and the fact that three quarters of newly created jobs were occupied by women.

178. While women had begun to participate more actively in political life, the percentage of women in the higher echelons of political power remained small. Various policies and affirmative action measures were sought to increase the number of women in public life, including through awareness-raising and training.

179. The right of Greek women to health care was guaranteed in the Constitution and was realized through a uniform and decentralized national health system, as confirmed by various indicators and demographic data. Specialized health care was available to all women, including immigrants and refugees, but more programmes are also planned to address women's special health problems, including teenage abortion, and health issues related to menopause. A drop in AIDS cases among women had been reported.

(b) Concluding comments by the Committee

Introduction

180. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Greece for submitting a well-written and comprehensive combined second and third periodic report. It commends the Government for its oral presentation of the report and for the extensive and frank replies to the questions posed by the Committee, which enabled it to obtain a clear picture of the situation of women in Greece.

181. The Committee notes favourably that the Government of Greece considers that the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women is substantially linked to the implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

182. The Committee commends the Government for creating a comprehensive constitutional and legislative framework for achieving equality between women and men. It notes in particular that the Constitution of 1975 enshrines the principle of equality between women and men and that a series of laws and policies have been put in place over the years to translate this principle into practice. The Committee notes the favourable legal situation, including with regard to employment, vocational training and health. It also notes that Greece has ratified the major conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) concerning women workers and workers with family responsibilities.

183. The Committee commends the Government in particular for its important new legislative measures concerning family law.

184. The Committee notes that the General Secretariat for Equality, the national machinery for the advancement of women, continues to function as a section of the Ministry of the Presidency. It also notes the existence of additional institutions that work on equality issues, such as the Research Centre for Equality Matters.

185. The Committee welcomes the fact that a large number of women's non-governmental organizations are active in the country, and that good relationships exist between those organizations of civil society and the governmental machinery for the advancement of women. In this context, it welcomes the fact that a national committee, with the participation of government representatives and civil society, was established for the preparation of the combined second and third periodic reports.

186. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Government to create equal opportunities for women in the labour market and the positive trends concerning the women's employment situation. It commends the Government of Greece for conducting a pilot survey on time use that aims at quantifying the unpaid household work of women. It also commends the Government for its strategies to use the mass media to improve the image of women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

187. The Committee notes with concern that the prevailing patriarchal structures and societal attitudes concerning the roles of women and men perpetuate discrimination against women in all spheres of public and private life and constitute an obstacle to achieving equality.

188. The Committee notes that the impact of the prevailing global and regional economic policies and trends is an impediment to the implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

189. The Committee expresses concern at the continuing existence of violence against women and notes the absence of comprehensive legislative measures to address violence. It is also concerned about the attitude of law enforcement personnel, especially the police, towards women victims of violence. It is also concerned that, notwithstanding a high incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace, its legal regulation remains unclear, and women do not avail themselves of available complaint mechanisms.

190. The Committee recommends that the Government strengthen the legislative and policy framework to prevent, eliminate and prosecute violence against women, in accordance with its general recommendation 19, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It recommends that data and information on the prevalence and types of violence in the family in general, and against women in particular, be gathered as a matter of priority. Urgent measures should be taken to institutionalize the training of police and law enforcement personnel to ensure the appropriate handling of cases of violence against women. Efforts should also be made to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of complaints mechanisms against sexual harassment in the workplace.

191. The Committee is concerned that the revision of the laws on rape has not led to the recognition of rape as a serious infringement of a woman's human right to personal security.

192. The Committee recommends that the law on rape, including marital rape, be reformed, and that forensic investigation be introduced in the light of general

recommendation 19, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and recent developments in the laws of other European countries that face similar problems of violence against women.

193. The Committee notes with concern that, following a number of recent court cases, the legality of affirmative action and temporary special measures in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention is unclear.

194. The Committee recommends that the Government clarify the compatibility of its legislative provisions with article 4.1 of the Convention to ensure its implementation.

195. The Committee notes with concern that, notwithstanding the availability of legal remedies to seek redress for discrimination and the fact that some court cases have been filed to challenge discrimination, very few women avail themselves of this right and are often reluctant to do so.

196. The Committee recommends that the Government develop programmes to raise awareness of the constitutional remedy among women and women's groups so that individual acts of discrimination will be consistently challenged and so that the Constitution will have an impact on government action and policy and on the private sector.

197. While noting positively the fact that prostitution is decriminalized and instead is dealt with in a regulatory manner, the Committee is concerned that inadequate structures exist to ensure compliance with the regulatory framework. The Committee is also concerned about the increase in trafficking in women. In this regard it notes that insufficient attention is given to possible links between lack of enforcement and trafficking in and migration of women.

198. The Committee recommends that compliance with the regulations governing prostitution be monitored effectively and adequate measures to address trafficking in women be introduced.

199. Noting the already low level of participation of women in political and public life, the Committee voices its concern at the apparent decrease in the percentage of women in elected office. It points to the consequences of this situation for the adoption of gender-sensitive legislative and policy measures.

200. The Committee urges the Government to adopt innovative measures to raise the percentage of women in all public bodies, including in the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Efforts should also be made to encourage other entities, such as political parties and the private sector, to increase the number of women at senior and decision-making levels.

201. The Committee is concerned that there is a relatively high level of functional illiteracy in Greece, in particular among elderly and rural women.

202. The Government is urged to intensify its efforts to prevent and to remedy functional illiteracy among women. The Government should also conduct a comprehensive review of all educational curricula at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels with a view to eliminating remaining discriminatory aspects, remedying the stereotypical portrayal of women and girls and creating an educational environment that is conducive to girls' and women's education and learning. The Government should include the achievement of equality between women and men and between girls and boys as a societal goal in its educational policy. The Committee urges the Government to establish degree-granting women's studies programmes to provide academic support to political and practical changes aimed at creating a non-patriarchal society.

203. Noting that there are positive trends in the employment situation of women, the Committee remains concerned about the situation of women in the formal and informal labour market, including the high percentage of unemployed women and the continuing pay gap between women and men. It is also concerned that many of the new jobs occupied by women might provide only low pay and limited career prospects. The Committee is further concerned that the employment prospects for women in rural areas, for women who are migrating from the agricultural sector into other employment areas and for immigrant women remain precarious, especially for those with low skills or who are functionally illiterate.

204. The Committee urges the Government to assess, in a comprehensive manner, the changing realities of women's work and to develop policies that aim at structural and long-term improvements in the employment situation of women. Particular attention should be paid to supporting women who work without pay in family enterprises and on family farms. It also urges the Government to address the issue of women migrant workers.

205. The Committee is concerned that insufficient attention is given to gender-specific causes and consequences of illness and disease and that, consequently, the country's health policy is insufficiently responding to gender factors associated with health.

206. The Committee recommends that all health-related data and statistics be disaggregated by sex and age so that health policies, service delivery and allocation of resources can be assessed in terms of their outcomes for women and men. It also recommends that governmental health policies, research

and resources be adjusted so as to respond adequately to the rights of women and men to a high standard of health care and to the gender factors associated with health.

207. The Committee expresses its concern about the high rate of abortion in Greece, and especially of abortions by teenagers. The numbers are indicative of insufficient use of contraceptives, a lack of sex education and information about contraceptives, as well as insufficient or unfocused family-planning efforts. The Committee is also concerned in this respect about the extent of funding for contraception, given the comprehensive coverage of health insurance and funding for health services in Greece.

208. The Committee recommends that the Government introduce sex education as part of the school curriculum. It also recommends the improvement of family-planning policies and measures so that all women and men have access to information about and measures of contraception. It also urges the Government to target men in its family-planning efforts and to stress the shared responsibilities of women and men in this regard.

209. Given the sometimes traumatic flow of immigrants and refugees in the region and constant changes in their composition, the Committee is concerned at the low level of continuous attention given to them by the Government. Likewise, the Committee notes that while attention is given to the situation of certain groups of minority women, such as gypsies, insufficient information is available concerning the situation of other ethnic and religious minority women, such as Turks and Albanians.

210. The Committee urges the Government to develop a general policy to address the particular needs of immigrant and migrant women with regard to their protection, health, employment and educational needs. The Committee also urges the Government to ensure that repatriation efforts are consistent with women's safety and protection needs. The Government should also consider entering into bilateral agreements with women migrants' countries of origin to ensure adequate protection of women's rights and safety. The Committee encourages the Government to assess the situation of all minority women with a view to ensuring adequate support for them.

211. The Committee recommends that the Government, when preparing its next report, engage in consultations with groups that represent minority women.

212. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Greece of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Greece, and in particular its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Thailand

213. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Thailand (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3) at its 417th and 418th meetings, on 29 January 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.417 and 418).

(a) Introduction by the State party

214. In her opening statement, a representative of the Government of Thailand noted that at the time of its accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985, Thailand had made seven reservations, five of which had been withdrawn by 1995. The representative indicated that efforts had been made to amend laws to allow for the withdrawal of the reservation to article 16 of the Convention, which deals with family life and marriage. However, several laws relating to family life discriminated against women, and traditional attitudes impeded attempts to amend those laws.

215. The representative noted that anti-discrimination legislation had been proposed but rejected by Thailand's legislators because the Constitution, promulgated in 1998, already stipulated equality between women and men and prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex. Other laws also included the principle of gender equality.

216. The representative drew attention to the National Commission on Human Rights, an independent body that could receive information on violations of human rights. It could also recommend the amendment of laws and make proposals for other remedial measures. She indicated that the 20-Year Perspective Policy and Plan for Women (1992-2011) and the Beijing Platform for Action had formed the basis of the five-year development plan for women, which was part of the eighth national, social and economic development plan. The National Commission for Women's Affairs (NCWA), established in 1989, had resulted from the five-year development plan, and among its goals was the promotion of the advancement of women and the creation of gender awareness. The Commission was also responsible for monitoring and evaluating programmes for women and initiating gender-sensitive research.

217. The representative indicated that the Beijing Platform for Action had been translated into Thai and that five

regional meetings had been organized by the Government to make the public aware of its terms, particularly in regard to violence against women and the girl child and trafficking in women and children.

218. The representative acknowledged that stereotyping of women and men still existed in Thai society, but there was growing awareness of the impact of gender stereotypes. NCWA had conducted a research project with regard to stereotypes in textbooks, and the Ministry of Education was revising textbooks. There had been increasing enrolment of women in traditionally male-dominated fields. The media had also begun to address stereotypes in programmes that presented women's views and gender perspectives, but the mass media in Thailand sometimes portrayed women and girls in accordance with traditional stereotypes.

219. The representative noted that since the submission of the previous report, significant efforts had been made to address the sexual exploitation of and trafficking in women and children. New legislation had been introduced, and NCWA was currently formulating a national plan of action for trafficking of women and children. Domestic violence against women and children had also been the focus of government activity, while comprehensive measures to prevent child labour had also been introduced.

220. The representative noted that, although there had been some progress in that regard, the participation of women in political and public life remained low. She noted that women usually entered traditional occupations and bore primary responsibility for family obligations.

221. The representative indicated that the 1998 labour protection code provided for gender equality in employment and prohibited sexual harassment. NCWA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, would establish a system to monitor that legislation so that it could be enforced effectively.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

222. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Thailand for its candid and comprehensive report, a supplementary report, as well as the additional information and written responses to the numerous questions put forward by the pre-session working group, as well as the clear responses provided in the oral presentation made by the representative of Thailand. The Committee also notes that the interactive nature of the country's presentation was useful for the purpose of sustaining a constructive dialogue with its members.

223. The Committee commends the Government for withdrawing five reservations to the Convention, and encourages it to continue its effort to withdraw the two remaining reservations. It particularly commends efforts to withdraw the reservation to article 16 relating to family life and marriage.

Positive aspects

224. The Committee commends the efforts undertaken by NCWA, in particular in formulating new laws and research-based policy recommendations. The Committee notes the cooperation with NCWA and non-governmental organizations in that regard.

225. The Committee is pleased to note that the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action have had a visible impact on the policies and laws of Thailand and in the realization of gender equality in the country. The Committee welcomes the new Constitution, which guarantees equality between women and men and includes provisions to promote the equal employment of women and men.

226. The Committee welcomes legislative measures on trafficking, prostitution, nationality, employment and child labour introduced from 1992 to 1998, as well as the compulsory education policies that have been adopted, which indicate that the Government of Thailand has made serious efforts to integrate the standards of the Convention into domestic laws and policies.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

227. The Committee notes that the recent financial crisis has been affecting the country's economic and social development and is an impediment to the implementation of the Convention.

228. The Committee is concerned that traditional attitudes that foster discrimination against women and girls continue to prevail and to hinder the full implementation of the Convention.

229. The Committee is concerned with the continued existence of Thailand's reservation to article 16 of the Convention which relates to marriage and family life.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

230. The Committee expresses its concern at the lack of effective law enforcement mechanisms and the lack of cases filed by women in the courts on the basis of constitutional guarantees. The Committee urges NCWA to study constitutional developments in other countries and practical

ways of strengthening the capacity of women to use the Constitution to ensure gender equality.

231. The Committee remains concerned that the Convention is not directly applicable in the courts in Thailand and that there is no separate law exclusively dealing with discrimination against women. The absence of a definition of discrimination congruent with the Convention in the Constitution is also of serious concern.

232. The Committee recommends the introduction of specific anti-discrimination legislation in compliance with article 1 of the Convention.

233. Noting the prevailing traditional attitudes affecting the advancement of Thai women, the Committee recommends that sensitization programmes for policy makers, administrators, legal personnel and other professionals involved in the health and education sector be provided. The Committee recommends that school textbooks be revised to eliminate stereotyped images of women and girls and to include women's human rights issues.

234. The Committee is concerned about the under-representation of women in politics and decision-making structures, including the judicial system. It emphasizes the importance of fostering a political and social environment conducive to women's promotion in all sectors of public and private life. The Committee recommends the introduction of affirmative action policies or temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, with goals and timetables to address the situation.

235. Recognizing that the Government has successfully raised the legal employment age from 12 to 15 years by extending compulsory education from 6 to 9 years, the Committee continues to be concerned about the early drop-out of girls from school and their early entry into the labour force. The Committee takes note of the proposal to introduce a children's rights law and recommends that the Government ensure that its provisions conform with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

236. The Committee expresses its concern about the status of women migrant workers. In particular, the Committee is concerned about cross-border trafficking in women and girls, forced prostitution and the commercial sex industry.

237. The Committee strongly recommends that the Government consider the issue of migration and commercial sex work as a critical human rights issue.

238. The Committee recommends that the Government explore the possibility of cooperation with other countries and coordination with non-governmental organizations when introducing measures to address the issue.

239. The Committee expresses concern about hill-tribe women and girls, whose rights may not be effectively protected by national laws.

240. The Committee recommends the introduction of legislation and other measures to protect effectively the rights of hill-tribe women and girls.

241. The Committee expresses its concern at the high suicide rate, as well as the prevalence of mental illness, among women.

242. The Committee recommends that the Government conduct research into these matters and include information on them in the next report.

243. Recognizing that sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence and marital rape, whether in the family, the community or the workplace, constitute violations of women's right to personal security and bodily integrity, the Committee urges the Government of Thailand to amend the penal code in the light of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and general recommendation 19 of the Committee.

244. The Committee is concerned that traditional stereotypes of women and men are reflected in some laws and portrayed in school text books and through the media, thereby undermining positive policies relating to gender equality.

245. The Committee urges that a review be made of laws and policies and school text books in order to remove gender stereotypes. It also recommends that the media be encouraged to portray girls and women in non-stereotyped ways.

246. The Committee encourages the Government to give full attention to the needs of rural women and to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes in all areas, in particular access to decision-making, health, education and social services.

247. The Committee is concerned that the current Name Law and other laws operate so as to restrict women's access to credit and land ownership when they marry foreigners.

248. The Committee strongly recommends the timely introduction of the proposed amended Names Act and the Nationality Law.

249. The Committee requests the Government of Thailand to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

250. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Thailand of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Thailand, and in particular government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

3. Third and fourth periodic reports

China

251. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of China (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2) at its 419th to 421st meetings, on 1 and 2 February 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.419-421). Addendum 2 to the third and fourth periodic reports covered the implementation of the Convention by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, over which the Government of China resumed the exercise of sovereignty on 1 July 1997.

(a) Introduction by the State party

252. The representative of China, in his introduction, noted that the Government of China had always attached great importance to the implementation of the Convention. The present report, covering the years 1989 to 1995, had been drafted under the leadership of the National Committee on Women and Children under the State Council, a body composed of 23 ministries and commissions of the Government, and five non-governmental organizations.

253. The representative highlighted the gradual improvement in the situation of women in political participation, education, health care and employment during the reporting period. At the same time, he noted that the equal rights of women had not been fully realized. The elimination of discrimination against women was being pursued through the development of the national economy and the strengthening of the legal system.

254. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women (the Women's Law), adopted in 1992, constituted the first basic law to protect women's rights and interests in a comprehensive and systematic manner. It defined four principles and set out the rights of women in the political, cultural, educational, labour and economic sphere, as well as in marriage and the family and with regard to the person.

255. The Programme for the Development of Chinese Women, formulated in 1995 in the light of the Beijing Platform for Action, constituted the first comprehensive programme on the overall plan of action for women's development. The Programme was aimed at encouraging government entities at various levels to take concrete steps for women's political participation, employment, education and health care, thus further implementing in practice the concept of gender equality as stipulated in the law. Among the main measures taken to ensure implementation of the Women's Law were the establishment of specialized agencies, the formulation of implementation measures by the various levels of administration in the light of local conditions, nationwide legal awareness campaigns, and review and monitoring of implementation.

256. The representative noted that the report also discussed the steps taken by the Government of China to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Additional information had been submitted to the Committee concerning measures taken from 1996 to mid-1998, including the revision of laws, improved action against criminal activities targeted at women and children, and re-employment measures for workers laid off in the economic restructuring. Follow-up action taken by relevant government institutions to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were also covered. Activities of non-governmental organizations in protecting women's rights and interests were also included in the report.

257. In conclusion, the representative noted that despite the tremendous amount of work done to promote women's full participation in development, quite a number of women in rural areas lived in poverty, more than 100 million women were still illiterate, and in the transition from a planned economy to a market economy and the reform process, large numbers of women workers had been laid off and were experiencing difficulties finding new employment. The participation of women in political life was still low, incidents of violations of women's rights continued to occur and certain social evils persisted. He emphasized, however, that his Government was determined to continue its efforts, and welcomed the support of the international community in that regard.

258. The representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in introducing the initial report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4/Add. 2), noted that the Government of China had resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong

Kong, with effect from 1 July 1997, under the principle of "one country, two systems". The Convention had been extended to Hong Kong on 14 October 1996 and had remained in force since the reunification on 1 July 1997.

259. The representative noted that the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, the constitutional document of the Region, included a list of fundamental rights and freedoms of residents and other persons in the Region, applicable to women and men. The Basic Law also provided for the continuing application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance.

260. The representative explained that in the period between 1996 and 1998, a legislative review had been undertaken leading to the enactment of a number of amendments and ordinances to eliminate discriminatory or unfair treatment of women. The rights of women were also protected by legislation that included the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (1995) and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (1997). The Equal Opportunities Commission, an independent statutory organization established in 1996, was responsible for the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality between women and men, for enforcing the anti-discrimination ordinances and for handling complaints.

261. The Government's Policy Groups, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and attended by senior representatives of the policy bureaux, ensured coordination among the various bureaux on all matters concerning women.

262. The improvement of the position and status of women in Hong Kong was apparent in different areas. In 1997, women accounted for 39 per cent of the total working population and made up 33 per cent of the civil service. Women also occupied two out of the three highest ranking government posts. Almost a third of the members of the Executive Council were women. Women made up between 21 and 36 per cent of the legal, accounting and medical professions.

263. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was committed to providing equal access to and opportunities in education, which included nine years of free and universal basic education. More than half the university graduates in 1997 were women.

264. Women's health remained a government priority, and a range of health-care services was available to women, including with regard to reproductive health. Hong Kong's infant mortality rate was among the lowest in the world, and women's life expectancy was 82.2 years.

265. The representative noted that China had entered seven reservations and declarations in respect of the application of the Convention to Hong Kong. These would be kept under review.

266. In conclusion, the representative welcomed the Committee's views and suggestions in support of the full implementation of the Convention.

(b) Concluding comments by the Committee: China

Introduction

267. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of China for submitting its combined third and fourth periodic reports. However, the Committee notes that the report insufficiently follows the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of periodic reports. In particular, the report does not incorporate sufficient statistical data disaggregated by sex, comparing the current situation to that at the time of the previous report.

268. The Committee commends the Government for its oral presentation of the report, and for the detailed oral and written replies, including statistical information, to the questions posed by the Committee.

269. The Committee commends the Government for having sent a high-level and large delegation that included specialists from different departments of the central Government, as well as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, headed by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations.

270. The Committee notes that Chinese women constitute more than one fifth of the world's women.

Positive aspects

271. The Committee acknowledges with appreciation the comprehensive efforts undertaken by the Government of China to implement the Convention since the consideration of its second periodic report in 1992. These efforts are indicative of the political will of the Government to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality between women and men. The Committee reaffirms that the Convention recognizes that women's rights include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and that they are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

272. The Committee commends the Government for further strengthening the legislative framework to ensure equality

between women and men. It notes in particular the 1992 Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women (the Women's Law), the 1995 Mother and Child Health Law, the 1996 and 1997 amendments to the criminal law with regard to trafficking in women, the 1996 Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly concerning social security provisions for the elderly, and the recent revision of the law on adoption.

273. The Committee commends the Government for the elaboration of programmes to ensure implementation of those laws, and especially the Programme for the Development of Chinese Women (1995-2000). It notes the achievements of the Government in ensuring social and economic rights for hundreds of millions of people. It also notes that economic reforms in recent years have brought about strong and steady economic growth. The Committee commends the efforts of the Government to combine economic restructuring with concern for the social well-being of China's citizens. It commends, in particular, the Government's efforts to alleviate poverty, to address the unemployment of women, to modify gender stereotypes, including in the mass media, to initiate legal awareness campaigns and to reduce illiteracy of women in rural areas. The Committee also commends the work of the All China Women's Federation in implementing government policy for gender equality.

274. The Committee welcomes the overall increase of facilities and personnel for maternal health care, the greater access to family planning services and to primary health care. It commends the Government for its collaboration with UNFPA to initiate a pilot family planning programme, based on voluntary participation, information and freedom of choice. The Committee welcomes in particular the Government's strong and unequivocal objection to the use of coercive measures in implementation of its population policy.

275. The Committee commends the Government for hosting, in September 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women and for its subsequent efforts to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Committee emphasizes that the Convention constitutes the legal basis and framework for the implementation of the Platform for Action.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

276. The Committee notes that the great size and diversity of China pose special challenges to the realization of equality between women and men.

277. The Committee notes that the persistence of prejudice and stereotypical attitudes concerning the role of women and men in the family and in society, based on views of male superiority and the subordination of women, constitutes a serious impediment to the full implementation of the Convention.

278. The Committee considers that the gap between the situation of women in urban areas and those in rural and remote areas constitutes a major obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention.

279. The Committee notes with concern the adverse impact of economic restructuring on women in the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, and in particular the gender-specific consequences for women's employment and re-employment.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

280. The Committee is concerned that the Government's approach to the implementation of the Convention has an apparent focus on the protection of women rather than on their empowerment. Thus, the central machinery responsible for government policy is the National Working Committee on Women and Children, perpetuating the identification of women with children. Similarly, in the area of women's health, there is a focus on mother-child health, limited to women's reproductive function. Likewise, labour laws and regulations overemphasize the protection of women.

281. The Committee recommends that the Government re-examine its approach to realizing gender equality, with an emphasis on the human rights framework of the Convention and the empowerment of women. The Government should encourage a country-wide social dialogue that advocates equality between women and men, and a comprehensive public campaign aimed at changing traditional attitudes.

282. The Committee recommends that the Government examine and enhance the structure, authority and resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women.

283. Although the Convention is an integral part of Chinese law, the Committee is concerned that the Women's Law does not contain a definition of discrimination against women. It is also concerned that the Women's Law does not provide for effective remedies in cases of violation of the law. It is unclear whether the Convention can be, or ever has been, invoked in a court of law, and what the outcome of such cases might have been.

284. The Committee recommends that the Government adopt legislation that expressly prohibits gender discrimination, including unintentional and indirect

discrimination, in accordance with the definition in article 1 of the Convention. It also recommends that the Government improve the availability of means of redress, including legal remedies, under the Women's Law. The Government should provide legal aid to women who suffer discrimination in its various forms, to assist them in the realization of their rights. It should also widely publicize all these measures so that adequate enforcement of the law can be ensured. The Committee recommends further that the Government adopt measures and allocate resources at both the central and provincial levels to monitor implementation of the various laws on gender equality.

285. The Committee is concerned about the diverse forms of violence against women in China, including custodial violence, sexual abuse, domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. The Committee is also concerned that economic conditions may contribute to an increase in violence against women.

286. The Committee recommends that the Government examine and revise its laws and policies on violence against women in the light of the Committee's general recommendation 19. This should include adoption of a special law on domestic violence and provision of services for survivors, such as shelters and hotlines. The handling of domestic violence cases should be systematically included in the training of law enforcement officials and health-care personnel. The Committee urges the Government to regulate sexual harassment and to provide legal remedies for women victims of sexual harassment in the workplace. The Committee requests the Government to provide information in its next report on procedures for ensuring the rights of women in custody to protection from sexual abuse and for sanctioning prison officers responsible for such abuse.

287. The Committee recommends that the Government consider the possibility of extending an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, including its causes and consequences, to visit China and all its provinces.

288. The Committee is concerned that prostitution, which is often a result of poverty and economic deprivation, is illegal in China.

289. The Committee recommends decriminalization of prostitution. Given the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Committee also recommends that due attention be paid to health services for women in prostitution. The Government is also urged to take measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of prostitutes into society.

290. Notwithstanding the serious efforts of the Government to combat trafficking in women, the Committee expresses its concern about reports in some localities of corrupt officials who are involved or colluding in the trade in women, including through payments from prostitutes.

291. The Committee urges the Government to investigate reports of local officials' involvement in trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution, and to prosecute all persons engaged in such practices.

292. The Committee is concerned that the proportional representation of women in all spheres of public life, and especially at the higher decision-making levels, has increased only minimally since the consideration of China's second report.

293. The Committee urges the Government to adopt temporary special measures within the meaning of article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention to increase the number of women at the higher echelons of Government. The women's talent bank of the All China Women's Federation should be used extensively to increase the percentage of women in all public bodies. The Government should also encourage gender-balance in the composition of village committees.

294. Notwithstanding the Government's positive efforts and achievements in reducing illiteracy, the Committee is concerned about the disproportionate persistence of illiteracy among women, especially women in rural and remote areas, and among ethnic and religious minority women. The Committee also notes a lack of information concerning the situation of women in science and technology.

295. The Committee recommends that the Government adopt a specific time-frame, with budgetary and resource allocation, for the achievement of universal literacy and primary education. It should also abolish official and unofficial school fees, which often result in the exclusion of girls from enjoying their right to education, particularly in poor rural areas. Special measures and incentives should be introduced to ensure that girls are able to fully utilize access to primary education, and are given opportunities for secondary and higher education and vocational training. Likewise, the Committee urges the Government to revise school textbooks and curricula to eliminate gender stereotypes and to include the achievement of gender equality as a societal goal in its education policy.

296. The Committee is concerned about the economic situation of women in the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy. The rising unemployment of women, difficulties in finding new employment, the lack of enforcement of labour laws for women workers and the continuing categorization of certain jobs as unsuitable for women are of particular concern. The Committee is concerned that retraining of unemployed women for jobs in

the service sector may lead to further gender segregation of the labour market, with women being trapped in low-wage sectors. The Committee notes with concern that women are faced with age discrimination as they seek re-employment. It is also concerned that an overemphasis on the protection of, rather than equal opportunities for, women in the labour market perpetuates stereotypes and creates additional obstacles for women competing in a market economy. The Committee notes that the situation of women workers in special economic zones also remains a concern.

297. The Committee is concerned about the consequences of women's loss of employment, or of interrupted employment, on women's rights to housing, health care and social security.

298. The Committee urges the Government to analyse, from a gender perspective, the effects of its economic policies, and to take steps to mitigate and counteract their negative effects on women. In addition to enforcing existing labour laws, the Committee invites the Government to increase women's means of redress against discrimination and inequality at work, including by promoting the recognition of women's right to participate in workers' organizations and their right to strike.

299. The Committee recognizes that population growth is a genuine and severe problem and that considerable progress has been made in providing family planning services, but expresses concern about various aspects of the implementation of China's population policy, including the following:

(a) The Committee notes with concern that only 14 per cent of men use contraceptives, thus making contraception and family planning overwhelmingly a woman's responsibility. In the light of the fact that vasectomy is far less intrusive and costly than tubal ligation, targeting mainly women for sterilization may amount to discrimination;

(b) Notwithstanding the Government's clear rejection of coercive measures, there are consistent reports of abuse and violence by local family planning officials. These include forced sterilizations and abortions, arbitrary detention and house demolitions, particularly in rural areas and among ethnic minorities;

(c) The Committee is concerned about the growing disparity in the male/female sex ratio at birth as an unintended consequence of the population policy, owing to the discriminatory tradition of son preference. The shortage of females may also have long-term implications regarding trafficking in women;

(d) The Committee is concerned about illegal practices of sex-selective abortion, female infanticide and the non-registration and abandonment of female children. The Committee expresses particular concern about the status of "out-of-plan" and unregistered children, many of them girls, who may be officially non-existent and thus not entitled to education, health care or other social benefits.

300. The Committee urges the Government to examine the ways in which its population policy is implemented at the local level and initiate an open public debate thereon. It urges the Government to promote information, education and counselling, in order to underscore the principle of reproductive choice, and to increase male responsibility in this regard. The Government should make clear that coercive and violent measures are prohibited and enforce such prohibition through fair legal procedures that sanction officials acting in excess of their authority. The Committee urges the Government to introduce gender-sensitivity training for family planning officials.

301. Recognizing that male children, especially in rural and remote areas, remain responsible for supporting people in old age, the Government should explicitly address the linkages between economic security in old age and its family planning policies. It should take all appropriate measures to modify and eliminate son preference, *inter alia*, by expanding educational and employment opportunities for women in rural areas. The Government should enforce laws against sex-selective abortion, female infanticide and abandonment of children and remove all legal disabilities from "out-of-plan" and unregistered children.

302. The Committee is concerned that traditional attitudes and prejudices against women remain particularly pronounced in rural areas. It notes, in particular, the lack of opportunities for rural women to benefit fully from the economic progress of China, and that rural women face loss of property rights as a result of change in marital status. In this regard, it notes that some 70 per cent of agricultural workers are women and that this requires particular attention. The Committee is also concerned about the high rates of suicide among rural women.

303. The Committee recommends that all government policy and planning for rural areas, including micro-credit, small enterprise development and other income-generating projects, be developed with the full and active participation of rural women. Urgent attention should be given to addressing women's suicide rates through measures such as the provision of mental health services and a better understanding of the causes of these suicides. Women's studies centres could be encouraged to undertake the necessary research. The Government is urged to ensure that

women have equal enjoyment of land rights independent of their marital status.

304. The Committee notes that there is no discussion in the report of women's participation in the informal sector of the economy. The Committee requests that this issue be addressed in the Government's next report.

305. The Committee urges the Government to integrate, in its next report, statistical information under each article of the Convention, to provide analysis of the situation of women over time, as well as in comparison to the situation of men, so that an assessment can be made of the factual progress made in implementation of the Convention.

306. In the light of the diversity of the country and its population, the Committee repeats the request it made in its concluding comments on China's second periodic report, that the Government provide in its reports a breakdown of information by provinces and autonomous regions and also include information on ethnic minorities particularly the Uyghur and Tibetan peoples.

307. The Committee urges the Government to translate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into local languages. It recommends a comprehensive public campaign to improve legal literacy of the Convention and to raise awareness of gender equality as a societal goal and of women's rights as human rights. It also recommends gender-sensitization training on the basis of the Convention for all government officials and cadres. The Committee urges the Government to initiate broad public discussions in the various provinces and autonomous regions in the preparation of its fifth periodic report under article 18 of the Convention.

(c) Concluding comments by the Committee: Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Introduction

308. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, for submitting, in a timely manner, an extremely well-structured and informative initial report. It commends the Government on its oral presentation of the report and for the detailed oral and written replies, including statistical information, to the questions posed by the Committee.

309. The Committee notes that there are many non-governmental organizations working actively in Hong Kong for the full implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

310. The Committee commends the Government of China for the continuing applicability of the Convention to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region following resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997 under the principle of "one country, two systems". It notes that the Government has disseminated the Convention, including through the Internet.

311. The Committee welcomes the guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and men, contained in the Hong Kong Basic Law and in the Bill of Rights Ordinance. It also notes the recent adoption and revision of laws to eliminate discrimination against women. The Committee commends, in particular, the Sex Discrimination Ordinance of 1995 and the establishment thereunder of the Equal Opportunities Commission as an independent statutory body and with adequate resources, responsible for addressing complaints on discrimination and promoting gender equality through public education and other means.

312. The Committee welcomes the recent judicial decision which has enforced the right to non-discrimination by recognizing that a non-marital child can claim residence in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the basis of the residence rights of either her mother or father.

313. The Committee expresses satisfaction at the high level of literacy and the universal system of free education.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

314. The Committee notes with concern that China has entered seven reservations and declarations in respect of the provisions of the Convention as applied to Hong Kong. Of particular concern is the reservation exempting "the affairs of religious denominations or orders" from the scope of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

315. The Committee expresses concern that the Basic Law does not contain a prohibition of discrimination against women.

316. The Committee recommends the adoption of a constitutional definition of discrimination, both direct and indirect, to complement the prohibition of discrimination in civil law under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

317. Notwithstanding the important mandate and valuable work of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Committee is concerned about the absence of a governmental

mechanism for the advancement of women in Hong Kong charged with the pro-active development of policy and long-term strategies on gender equality.

318. The Committee recommends that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region establish a high-level central mechanism with appropriate powers and resources to develop and coordinate a women-focused policy and long-term strategy to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

319. The Committee expresses concern that the electoral system of the Region contains structural obstacles to the equal political participation of women, which is indirect discrimination against women, especially with respect to the functional constituencies.

320. The Committee urges the Government to take all measures necessary to ensure the equal representation of women in all constituencies, including rural committees, on the basis of the principle of universal and equal suffrage, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation 23.

321. The Committee notes the low representation of women in governmental advisory boards and statutory committees, as well as in the civil service and the judiciary.

322. The Committee recommends that the Government make use of affirmative action and temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to realize women's right to participation in all areas of public life and particularly at high levels of decision-making. It also recommends that the Government study the experience of other countries in using quotas, timetables for achieving specified goals and databases on women candidates, with a view to applying them in Hong Kong.

323. The Committee is concerned that the Domestic Violence Ordinance applies only to physical abuse in marital relations, and that it does not provide for counselling and treatment of offenders. It also notes with concern that the report does not contain information on rape and that marital rape is not considered a criminal offence in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

324. The Committee recommends that the Government enhance services for survivors of domestic violence, including domestic workers, with a view to their empowerment and rehabilitation, including through psychological counselling, legal aid, temporary shelter and appropriate health services. The Committee also urges the amendment of existing legislation to include marital rape as a criminal offence. It requests the Government to provide information on sexual crimes, including rape and marital rape, in its next report under article 18 of the Convention.

325. The Committee notes that while prostitution itself is not unlawful, provisions to ensure the health and safety of sex workers are unclear, and there may be discrimination against women in the enforcement of related crimes.

326. The Committee recommends that adequate regulations to protect women sex workers be put in place and enforced. It also recommends that the Government monitor the links between the presence of migrant women, a regulatory approach to prostitution and trafficking in women.

327. The Committee commends efforts to develop a standard labour contract for migrant workers with provision for minimum wages, but it is concerned that these workers can be exposed to abuse and custodial violence.

328. The Committee recommends that the Government monitor and take action to protect women migrant workers from abuse and violence, as well as to prevent such violence.

329. Noting that over 50 per cent of recent university graduates were women, the Committee is nevertheless concerned at the degree of segregation in the educational specialization of women and men and at the low percentage of women in the higher levels of the teaching professions and academia.

330. The Committee recommends the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at increasing de facto equality between women and men within the meaning of article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention, to increase the number of women in non-traditional areas of education, especially in science, technology and engineering, and to promote women from junior and auxiliary positions in teaching and academia to senior positions. It urges the Government to address the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and to allocate adequate resources for gender studies programmes.

331. Noting the growing participation of women in the formal economy and the low level of unemployment of women, the Committee is nonetheless concerned about the large discrepancies in wages earned by men and women. The Committee is also concerned about the highly disproportionate number of women in the lowest wage levels, especially given the absence of minimum wage laws. The Committee is also concerned that the contraction of the manufacturing sector affects particularly low-skilled women.

332. The Committee recommends that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value be included in relevant legislation and that criteria be established to determine the measure of equal value in a largely gender-segregated labour market.

333. The Committee encourages the Government to review regularly the reservations entered to the Convention. It urges the Government to amend all laws that are incompatible with the Convention, including those relating to immigration and to pension schemes, with a view to removing the relevant reservations. In particular, it encourages the Government to eliminate discrimination against indigenous women following its review of the small house policy. The Committee also encourages the Government to re-examine the reservation relating to the favourable treatment of women in respect of labour law protection of pregnancy and maternity, which might well be in accordance with articles 4, paragraph 1, and 11, paragraph 2, of the Convention, as well as that regarding religious denominations.

334. The Committee invites the Government to hold public consultations with non-governmental organizations in the process of the implementation of the Convention and when preparing its second periodic report.

335. The Committee requests the Government of China and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in the next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

336. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of China and the Region, and particularly its government administrators, politicians and senior level cadres aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

4. Fourth periodic reports

Colombia

337. The Committee considered the fourth periodic report of Colombia (CEDAW/C/COL/4) at its 422nd and 423rd meetings, on 3 February 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.422 and 423).

(a) Introduction by the State party

338. In introducing the report, the representative underlined the commitment of the Government of Colombia to the goal of gender equality. She noted that that commitment was manifested in the Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, which was in the process of being adopted and which was part of the National Plan for Development. The coordinating institution for the plan would be the National Office for Equality for Women, the government agency responsible for coordinating activities to promote the equality and participation of women. The Plan would be a significant part of the implementation of the international commitments for the advancement of women, including the Beijing Platform for Action.

339. The representative indicated that article 13 of the 1991 Constitution incorporated the concept of equality between women and men as a fundamental right. She also noted that article 93 of the Constitution provided that treaties took precedence over domestic legislation and were drawn on the interpretation of the Bill of Rights.

340. Among the constitutional mechanisms to ensure the effective exercise of human rights in Colombia was *acción de tutela*, which allowed individuals to seek protection of fundamental human rights in the courts. Laws could also be brought before the courts and declared unconstitutional. The representative noted that a large body of jurisprudence with regard to human rights had developed over the eight years since the adoption of the 1991 Constitution.

341. The representative informed the Committee that recent activities of the National Office for Equality for Women had included support to women's organizations in activities to promote political participation and citizenship, the strengthening of women's networks, as well as the discussion with women's organizations on the National Development Plan, 1998-2002.

342. The representative indicated that Law 294 on violence in the family had been adopted in 1996 and that the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women had also been ratified. She also described Law 360, adopted in 1997, which increased penalties for violence. In addition, the title of the chapter of the Penal Code relating to sexual crimes had been amended to emphasize such crimes as the violation of personal freedom and dignity, rather than morals.

343. The representative noted that displaced women faced significant problems, including violence, and that the Government had introduced the National Plan for Attention to the Displaced Population to give priority attention to their needs. She also described the effects of armed conflict on women.

344. The representative informed the Committee that women's representation in public life in Colombia was still

low, but that the President had recently appointed two women ministers. While there had been some increase in the enrolment of girls at the primary level, their educational level was still lower than boys. Initiatives to improve girls' access to education included a project to address stereotyped textbooks and promote coeducation.

345. The representative noted that an increasing number of women were entering the labour market, in particular in urban areas. However, despite their level of education, they received lower wages than men and occupied fewer decision-making positions. In addition, women were affected by unemployment.

346. The representative indicated that life expectancy was 64.3 years for men and 73.24 years for women. The Government had adopted a series of measures with regard to sexual and reproductive health in the General System of Social Security in Health and had launched several information campaigns, including on HIV/AIDS prevention.

347. The representative emphasized that important advances had been made to integrate the gender perspective in the rural sector.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

348. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Colombia for its fourth report, which contains a comprehensive, candid and critical account of the progress that has been achieved since the submission of the previous report. The report describes the difficulties and obstacles that still impede the implementation of the Convention and the programmes that have been implemented to promote the advancement of women and the exercise of their rights.

349. The presence of the delegation headed by the Director of the National Office for Equality for Women, at a time when the country is suffering the consequences of a disaster caused by an earthquake that has plunged the nation into a terrible tragedy, is testimony to the importance that the Government of Colombia attaches to the Convention. The Committee deeply appreciates this gesture, which underscores the political will of the Government to improve the status of women in Colombia.

350. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the comprehensive replies to the questions that have been asked and for the fruitful dialogue, which has contributed to a better understanding of the situation of women in Colombia and to an in-depth review of the implementation of each article of the Convention.

351. The Committee appreciates the fact that the Government of Colombia supports the adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention.

Positive aspects

352. The Committee notes that the Convention can be invoked in national courts, since it enjoys precedence within the domestic legal order and thus prevails in situations of conflict of laws.

353. The Committee takes note of the significant progress that has been achieved with the adoption of legislative measures for the protection of women. The 1991 Constitution provides for the equality of men and women before the law and defines discrimination. In accordance with the Constitution, important social legislation has been enacted, including legislation on education, social security, dissolution of religious marriages, protection of women heads of household and punishment of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

354. The Committee notes that the *acción de tutela* or amparo have been increasingly used by women as a constitutional means of protecting their rights. The Ombudsman's Office has also been created along with a special unit for the protection of the rights of children, women and the elderly, which assists the Ombudsman's Office by playing a positive role in requesting reviews of *acción de tutela*.

355. The Committee welcomes the creation by the Government of national machinery, namely, the National Office for Equality for Women, which is attached to the Office of the President of the Republic and advises the Government in that field. The National Office can also propose policies and programmes and works in coordination with various women's non-governmental organizations.

356. The Committee notes that primary school enrolment rates have increased, that the rate of female illiteracy has declined and that the Ten-Year Education Plan, 1996-2005, has placed special emphasis on the objective of eliminating all situations of gender discrimination or exclusion, including the introduction of the gender dimension in the education system. Research and consultation have also been carried out to document the issue of equality of men and women, and a strategy of awareness-raising is being developed for publishers of school textbooks, with a view to eradicating gender stereotypes.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

357. The social and economic reality of Colombia remains a serious obstacle to the full participation and advancement of women in society, as well as to the implementation of the Convention. As a result of economic restructuring and adjustment policies, which take little account of social development, over half of the population of Colombia lives below the poverty line. In addition, inequitable patterns of income distribution as well as substantial differences between the urban and rural areas, impede the implementation of the Convention.

358. The Committee notes with concern the persistence of widespread violence as a result of the armed conflict in the country. Women are the principal victims and there are tens of thousands of displaced women and female heads of household who lack the resources needed for their survival in a situation in which they are called upon to assume greater responsibilities, both reproductive and productive, towards their families and communities.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

359. The Committee notes with concern that little has been done to disseminate the text of the Convention, as required under the constitutional provisions governing the rights of women, and of the supplementary legislation that has been enacted.

360. The Committee recommends that steps be taken to disseminate those norms and to educate the general population, particularly women, about the law as an essential step towards enabling them to learn about and defend their rights.

361. The Committee calls attention to the gaps that exist in follow-up and control mechanisms in the current legislation. There is no effective machinery to enforce compliance with court rulings, nor are there any studies or assessments relating to compliance with legislation on women.

362. The Committee recommends that practical measures on the follow-up and monitoring of legislation be taken, that assessments of their effectiveness be carried out and that mechanisms guaranteeing compliance with court rulings be created.

363. The Committee points out that there has been no systematic development of training programmes for government, State or court officials or for police forces responsible for the implementation of the rules and procedures relating to compliance with the law and the implementation of the Convention.

364. The Committee recommends the introduction of training programmes for all those officially responsible for ensuring compliance with current legislation.

365. The Committee is concerned at the level of authority and rank accorded to the Government's national advisory machinery, which limits its functions to proposing policies and programmes.

366. The Committee recommends that the Government consider strengthening the role of the National Office for Equality for Women, by means of a national law raising its status to that of an autonomous body with all the requisite powers and resources to be able to exercise more effective influence in Colombian society.

367. The Committee notes with concern that, although various programmes for the benefit of women are in place, the economic adjustment programmes restrict public expenditure, thus limiting the availability of resources, which in turn hinders the incorporation of women's interests in State policies and programmes.

368. The Committee recommends that in the allocation of budgetary resources priority be given to the needs of women, especially women of limited means, including access to employment, education and public services, since social investment in women constitutes one of the most effective means of combating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

369. The Committee notes that despite the efforts made it has not proved possible to incorporate in legislation temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men within article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention so as to ensure women's political participation, under the Constitution, because it is seen as discriminatory and there is clearly resistance on the part of legislative, executive and judicial bodies to their being put into effect.

370. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to the possibility of adopting temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to promote the increased integration of women in decision-making in the country's administrative and political life.

371. The Committee recognizes the difficulties faced by the Government in putting law and order into effect in a situation of internal conflict and paramilitary violence. It takes note of the incidence of violence directed against women in custody, including cases of kidnapping and disappearances. Moreover, it notes with concern the increasing danger in which the individuals forming

organizations promoting human rights in Colombia find themselves.

372. The Committee urges the Government of Colombia to establish an effective national mechanism, including complaints procedures, that will ensure that those guilty of criminal conduct, both State officials and private individuals, stand trial. The Committee recommends that the Government step up security measures for all those who promote and defend human rights, especially in view of kidnappings and other acts that constitute an assault on physical integrity, with particular attention to the situation of women.

373. The Committee is concerned that, despite the efforts that have been made, the Government's ability to ensure compliance with the rules providing for punishment for domestic violence is restricted. Moreover, the family commissions do not have the necessary human or financial resources to carry out their mandate and there is no systematic supervision of their work by the relevant government body. As a result, efforts to help victims are inadequate. The Committee stresses that, since a human rights issue is involved, it is the Government's responsibility to act to reduce violence against women, investigate cases and give treatment and support to the victims of violence.

374. The Committee recommends that effective measures be taken to ensure compliance with the law and that due attention be paid to the family commissions to enable them to carry out their functions.

375. The Committee is concerned that there is currently before Congress a bill to decriminalize domestic violence at both the civil and criminal level, passing responsibility for dealing with these human rights violations to an administrative court.

376. The Committee recommends that the bill be reassessed, since it represents a step backwards from the progress achieved by the country in legislative terms in tackling and confronting the problem of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

377. The Committee is concerned that, although national legislation condemns inhuman and degrading treatment, many women are forced to become prostitutes in order to survive and there is traffic in women. Preventive mechanisms are lacking and the State has little capacity to confront the national and international criminal organizations engaged in procurement, which operate with a high degree of impunity.

378. The Committee recommends that the Inter-institutional Committee that has taken various measures to prevent and punish traffic in women should organize a more energetic and effective work strategy in order to deal with this serious phenomenon.

379. The Committee is extremely concerned at the situation of street children, in particular girls, with respect to their human rights and physical integrity.

380. The Committee recommends that the needs of street children, especially girls, be integrated systematically into all poverty-eradication, social-development and anti-violence plans and programmes.

381. The Committee notes that no systematic effort is being made to counter discriminatory cultural traditions and change sexist stereotypes and that the media continue to project stereotyped images of women.

382. The Committee recommends that a systematic effort be made to educate the population on gender issues by all possible methods and in all sectors and that programmes be developed with the aim of raising the awareness of media personnel with respect to equality of men and women, with a view to eradicating sexist stereotypes in all media.

383. The Committee notes that there is little participation by women in management and decision-making bodies and that there is a lack of specific measures to promote their participation.

384. The Committee recommends that statistics be disaggregated by sex, in a systematic manner, and included in the next periodic report and that steps be taken to guarantee greater involvement of women in decision-making.

385. The Committee is concerned that the school drop-out rate of girls and young women remains high and that the causes of this high rate are linked to sexist stereotypes and that, in addition, the vocational choices made by women when they enter higher education are still gender-differentiated.

386. The Committee recommends [illegible] regulations, programmes and other measures, including career counselling, be put in place to prevent girls and young women from dropping out of school and to reverse the trend of high female drop-out rates. It recommends the introduction of vocational programmes to promote the access of women and men to all careers.

387. The Committee notes with concern that women constitute the majority of the unemployed and that the majority of women work in the informal and service sectors, frequently as domestic workers. It notes that within these groups, women receive the lowest wages, and that there are gaps in the level of pay received by women and men for equal work and work of equal value.

388. The Committee recommends that appropriate measures be taken to improve the status of working women, including through the establishment of child-care centres and the introduction of training programmes to promote the integration of women into the labour force and to diversify their participation, through the implementation of legislative measures and through greater efforts to achieve equal pay for work of equal value.

389. The Committee is concerned that, although maternity protection is ensured by law and provision is made for maternity leave in the relevant legislation, the law is sometimes broken and women must meet certain requirements in order to have access to jobs, such as undergoing pregnancy tests.

390. The Committee recommends that steps be taken to ensure compliance with the law and that those who engage in such discriminatory practices are punished. It also reiterates that women must be made aware of their rights through wider dissemination of legislation providing protection for them as workers.

391. While welcoming the preventive measures taken by the Government, including the fact that it has set a minimum age for employment, the Committee notes with concern how widespread child labour is in Colombia, since it leads to the exploitation of girls and the violation of their rights to health, education and future opportunities.

392. The Committee urges the Government to adopt and implement a compulsory education policy, since such a policy is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that girls do not work during school hours.

393. The Committee notes with great concern that abortion, which is the second cause of maternal deaths in Colombia, is punishable as an illegal act. No exceptions are made to that prohibition, including where the mother's life is in danger or to safeguard her physical or mental health or in cases where the mother has been raped. The Committee is also concerned that women who seek treatment for induced abortions, women who seek an illegal abortion and the doctors who perform them are subject to prosecution. The Committee believes that legal provisions on abortion constitute a violation of the rights of women to health and life and of article 12 of the Convention.

394. The Committee calls upon the Government to consider taking immediate action to provide for derogations from this legislation. Furthermore, it asks the Government to provide regular statistics on maternal mortality by region.

395. The Committee is concerned that sterilization is the most widely used family planning method. It believes that it might be unnecessary to make such widespread use of sterilization if couples were better informed and instructed in the use of family planning methods and had ready access to contraceptives.

396. The Committee recommends that information on the use of contraceptives be more widely disseminated, that the necessary effort be made to ensure that women, including women in the most vulnerable population segments, have access to affordable contraceptives, and that action be taken to promote the use of contraception by men, particularly vasectomy.

397. The Committee is concerned at the situation of women in rural areas, where there is a considerable lag in basic services infrastructure, low health and education coverage, and lower quality of life for most of the population. These factors are an obstacle to integrating women in development and ending their difficult living conditions, which, together with violence, are responsible for rural women being one of the population groups that are most vulnerable and subject to discrimination.

398. The Committee recommends that existing programmes be expanded with a view to improving the status of rural women, particularly among displaced populations, and that attention be focused as a matter of priority, on rural women with a view to improving their health, education and quality-of-life indicators.

399. The Committee recommends that those involved in planning and programme implementation receive gender-sensitive training. It recommends the introduction of micro-credit programmes to improve the economic situation of women, as well as programmes to improve the enjoyment by rural women and displaced women of their human rights to health and education.

400. The Committee requests the Government of Colombia to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in the next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

401. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Colombia of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of Colombia, and in particular government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Chapter V
Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

402. The Committee considered ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (agenda item 8) at its 405th meeting, on 19 January 1999.

403. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who introduced the report of the Secretariat (CEDAW/C/1999/I/4) and a working paper containing draft rules of procedure (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group I

404. At its 424th meeting, on 5 February 1999, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group I (CEDAW/C/1999/I/WG.I/WP.1) and took the following decisions.

1. States parties presentation of initial reports

405. The Committee decided that, in introducing their initial reports, States parties should provide an oral presentation updating their written reports that should be no longer than the time allotted for presentation (i.e., 45 minutes) indicated in the Committee's programme of work and in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

406. The Committee reiterated its decision 16/III, in which it decided, on an exceptional basis and as a temporary measure, to invite States parties to combine a maximum of two reports. When a State party's initial report is long overdue, the Committee decided to consider a revised reporting schedule with regard to that State party's periodic reports at the session at which it presents its initial report, and to inform the State party accordingly.

2. States parties presentation of periodic reports

407. The Committee decided that, in introducing their periodic reports, States parties should provide an oral presentation updating their written reports that should not exceed 60 minutes. The time limit for the oral presentation should be reflected in the Committee's programme of work and in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

408. The Committee decided that, following their introductory statements, States parties presenting periodic reports should be prepared to engage in an open and in-depth dialogue, including questions and immediate answers, with the Committee.

3. Pre-session working group

409. The Committee decided that, in its formulation of the lists of issues and questions with regard to periodic reports, the pre-session working group should concentrate on major issues and trends and should limit the number of issues and questions so as to encourage constructive dialogue between the Committee and States parties during the presentation of reports.

410. The Committee decided that the Secretariat should continue to provide to the pre-session working group draft lists of issues and questions with regard to periodic reports of States parties, based on a comparison of current reports with earlier reports and the Committee's consideration of those reports and other relevant information, including concluding observations of other treaty bodies. The Committee decided that the Secretariat should also continue to provide information to the pre-session working group on human rights treaties ratified by reporting States parties, as well as the text of any reservations entered to those treaties, in particular to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the text of the Committee's and other treaty bodies' concluding comments on previous reports of States parties and the available summary records of the consideration of those States parties' reports by the Committee and any comments of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women with regard to those States parties. In addition, the Committee decided that the Secretariat should continue to provide the reports of the country rapporteurs assigned to periodic reports to the pre-session working group.

411. The Committee reaffirmed it's decision 18/I concerning participation in the pre-session working group, in which it decided that representatives of the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, should be invited to provide country-specific information to the pre-session working group on those States parties whose reports were before the group.

412. The Committee decided to designate reports to be considered at least two sessions in advance. Country rapporteurs, who should normally be from the same region, would also be designated well in advance. The Secretariat should immediately inform those States parties that had been designated by the Committee to report. States parties presenting periodic reports should be entitled to submit further reports or information no later than two and a half

months prior to the pre-session working group that would be considering those reports.

413. The Committee decided that the list of issues and questions with respect to periodic reports should normally be sent to States parties presenting their periodic reports within two weeks of the conclusion of the pre-session working group. It also decided that States parties should submit their written answers no later than four weeks after receipt of the list of issues and questions. States parties' answers should normally be submitted for translation so as to be available to Committee members at least four weeks before the session at which the relevant reports were to be considered.

414. The Committee requested that the Secretariat examine the practice of other treaty bodies in cases where the next periodic report of a State party to be considered by the pre-session working group was due or would fall due shortly after its earlier periodic report was considered by the pre-session working group and extensive and satisfactory replies to the list of issues and questions were provided. Information on this issue should be provided to the Committee in the report on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee to be presented to the Committee at its twenty-first session.

4. Receipt of reports by experts

415. The Committee requested that the Secretariat make its best efforts to ensure receipt of reports by experts at least eight weeks prior to the session at which such reports were to be considered by the Committee.

416. The Committee decided that the Secretariat should inform experts as soon as possible when a State party nominated by the Committee to present its report indicated that it would be unable to present its report.

5. Report to the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

417. The Committee decided to revise its report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action based on its review of reports of States parties (see General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 12) and to incorporate relevant discussion at the twentieth session of the Committee. It also decided that the report should be amended to reflect the stress placed in the Platform for Action on the importance of universal ratification of the Convention and the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, as well as to underscore the Committee's concern in regard to economic restructuring and its effects on the implementation of the Convention and the Platform for Action.

6. Draft rules of procedure

418. The Committee designated Silvia Cartwright to review the draft rules of procedure contained in document CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1 and to submit her proposals to the Committee for its consideration at its twenty-first session.

7. Matters raised at the tenth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies

Universal ratification

419. The Committee decided to endorse the plan of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a concerted and comprehensive campaign for universal ratification of human rights treaties, particularly in the context of the target set in the Beijing Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It recommended that in her statement to the Commission on Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urge universal ratification of the Convention. It also recommended that the Chairperson renew efforts to seek the support of the heads of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in the campaign for universal ratification. In addition, it recommended that the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women continue to strengthen their efforts to encourage universal ratification and the fulfilment of their reporting obligations by States parties.

Focused periodic reports

420. The Committee decided to postpone consideration of the question of focused periodic reports until a review had been made of the Committee's working methods as a result of the changed timing of the pre-session working group.

Reservations

421. The Committee decided that the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should outline the Committee's work on reservations and reiterate the Committee's concern with regard to the compatibility of some reservations to the object and purposes of the Convention to the Special Rapporteur on reservations of the International Law Commission. It also decided that the Chairperson should provide this material to

Françoise Hampson, the expert of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities who is preparing a study on reservations.

8. Meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies

422. The Committee decided that the agenda of the meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies should be sent in advance to members of the Committee to allow them to provide advice on the matters raised therein prior to the meeting, if they wished, to the Chairperson of the Committee. The Committee also decided that the report of the chairpersons meeting should be provided to all members of the Committee, if possible, before the session after the chairpersons meeting, and that the Chairperson should provide a written and oral report of the meeting at that session of the Committee.

9. Information for the Committee

423. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat provide to the Committee information on relevant human rights activities within the United Nations in a twice yearly newsletter.

10. Work of the Committee

424. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat continue to compile the serial Work of CEDAW, including with regard to past years. It also recommended that the Secretariat examine ways and means of producing past and future volumes in electronic form.

11. Reports to be considered at future sessions

425. Bearing in mind the criteria of date of submission, geographical balance and reports delayed from earlier sessions, the Committee decided to consider the following reports at its twenty-first, twenty-second and twenty-third sessions:

Twenty-first session

Initial report

Belize

Nepal

Georgia

Second and third reports

Chile

Ireland (combined second and third reports)

Third and fourth reports

Spain

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Twenty-second session

Initial report

India

Jordan

Second report

Equatorial Guinea

Uruguay

Combined second and third periodic reports

Burkina Faso

Combined second, third and fourth periodic reports

Germany

Third report

Belarus

Luxembourg

Finland

Fourth report

Sweden

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the fourth periodic report of Denmark.

Twenty-third session

Initial report

Republic of Moldova

Second report

Netherlands

Third report

Egypt

Jamaica

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Combined third and fourth periodic reports

Austria

Fourth report

Denmark

Romania

12. Members of the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session

426. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session and their alternates should be:

Member

Ahoua Ouedraogou (Africa)

Ivanka Corti (Europe)

Rosalyn Hazelle (Latin America and the Caribbean)

Alternate

Kongit Sinegiorgis (Africa)

Carmel Shalev (Europe)

Zelmira Regazzoli (Latin America and the Caribbean)

427. The Committee decided to delegate the task of nominating the fourth member of the working group to the Chairperson in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee.

13. United Nations meetings to be attended by the Chairperson or members of the Committee in 1999

428. The Committee recommended that the Chairperson or an alternate should attend the following meetings:

(a) Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session;

(b) Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session;

(c) The eleventh meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies;

(d) General Assembly at tis fifty-fourth session (Third Committee).

14. Dates of the twenty-first session of the Committee

429. Consistent with the calendar of conferences for 1999, the twenty-first session should be held from 7 to 25 June 1999. The pre-session working group for the twenty-second session will meet from 28 June to 2 July 1999.

Chapter VI

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

430. The Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 7) at its 405th meeting, on 19 January 1999 and at a closed meeting on 20 January 1999.

431. The item was presented by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of women, who introduced the following items:

(a) Draft general recommendation on article 12 of the Convention (CEDAW/C/1999/WG.II/WP.2);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General on reports of the specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1999/I/3 and Add.1-4).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group II

432. At its 424th meeting, on 5 February 1999, the Committee took the following action on the basis of the report of Working Group II.

1. General recommendation on article 12

433. The Committee adopted the draft general recommendation on article 12 contained in document CEDAW/C/1999/I/WG.II/WP.2/Rev.1 (see chap. I.A).

2. Long-term programme of work on general recommendations

434. The Committee decided to take up articles 4 and 2 in its long-term programme of work on general recommendations. Work on a general recommendation on article 4 would begin at its twenty-second session, in January 2000.

3. Publicity for the work of the Committee

435. The Committee decided that the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat should make its best effort to ensure that all United Nations information centres were informed of the reports to be taken up by the Committee at its sessions. It also recommended that the Department make its best effort to ensure that the information centres received the concluding comments of the Committee as soon as

possible and were encouraged to disseminate the concluding comments in the relevant States. The Division for the Advancement of Women should make its best effort to inform regional commissions and regional intergovernmental organizations, of the reports to be considered at the sessions of the Committee and to provide those bodies with relevant concluding comments of the Committee.

4. Twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention

436. The Committee decided that the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be marked by a number of events, including a seminar or conference, with the participation of representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations as well as members of the Committee. It also decided to hold a special meeting with the participation of the Secretary-General and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and a round table with former chairpersons and members of the Committee and members of other treaty bodies. Events could also include a panel discussion on universal ratification and a panel discussion with the Secretaries-General of the four conferences on women highlighting the importance and impact of the Convention at the national level. In addition, the Chairperson of the Committee could facilitate a discussion on reservations with delegates attending the Third Committee of the General Assembly in 1999. The Committee decided that the Bureau and the Chairperson of Working Group II should work closely with the Secretariat to organize an event during the twenty-first session of the Committee within existing resources and with any extrabudgetary resources that might be provided in this connection.

Chapter VII
Provisional agenda for the twenty-first session

437. The Committee considered the provisional agenda for its twenty-first session (agenda item 9) at its 424th meeting, on 5 February 1999. The Committee decided to approve the following provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the twentieth and twenty-first session of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda for the twenty-second session.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-first session.

Chapter VIII
Adoption of the report

438. At its 424th meeting, on 5 February 1999, the Committee adopted the report on its twentieth session (CEDAW/C/1999/I/L.1 and Add.1-8, as orally amended).

Part two

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its twenty-first session

Letter of transmittal

12 August 1999

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its twenty-first session from 7 June to 25 June 1999 at United Nations Headquarters. It adopted its report on the session at its 444th meeting, on 25 June 1999. The report of the Committee is herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

(*Signed*) Aída **González Martínez**
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

His Excellency Mr. Kofi **Annan**
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I
Matters brought to the attention of States parties

A. Decisions

Decision 21/I
Exceptional reports

The Committee decided that it may sometimes be necessary to request exceptional reports from States parties, under article 18.1 (b) of the Convention, in order to obtain and examine the information on an actual or potential violation of women's human rights, where there is special cause for concern about such violation. In this respect, the Committee decided to adopt the following standards and guidelines:

(a) There should be reliable and adequate information indicating grave or systematic violations of women's human rights;

(b) Such violations are those that are gender-based or directed at women because of their sex;

(c) Reports should focus on a particular issue or issues identified by the Committee;

(d) States parties shall submit their reports for consideration at such session as the Committee determines.

Decision 21/II
Observations by States parties on concluding comments

The Committee decided that observations by States parties on concluding comments will be circulated to members of the Committee and their receipt acknowledged in an annex to the Committee's next annual report to the General Assembly. The Committee may decide to make available such observations independently of its annual report.

B. Suggestions

Suggestion 21/1
Report on efforts towards universal ratification, timely reporting and the acceptance of the amendment to article 20.1 of the Convention

The Committee suggested that a report be provided at each session of the Committee on efforts by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women with regard to universal ratification, timely reporting and acceptance of the amendment of article 20.1 of the Convention.

Chapter II
Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. On 25 June 1999, the closing date of the twenty-first session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 163 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex I.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its twenty-first session at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 25 June 1999. The Committee held 20 plenary meetings (425th to 444th). A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex III, section B. The Committee decided to take up agenda items 5 and 6 in a working group of the whole, which held 13 meetings.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Aída González Martínez (Mexico).

5. Before taking up the regular work of the session, the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention was commemorated. The commemoration consisted of two parts: a solemn commemoration of the adoption of the Convention, with the presence of a number of past and present members of the Committee, and a round table on the impact of the Convention at the domestic level.

6. Statements by the current and first Chairpersons of the Committee, Aída González Martínez and Luvsandanzangyn Ider, respectively, were made at the solemn commemoration. Statements were also made by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Louise Fréchette, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and

Social Affairs, Nitin Desai, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Angela E. V. King, and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, Yakin Ertürk. A message from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was read by Bacre Waly Ndiaye, Director of the New York Office of the High Commissioner.

7. Statements emphasized the catalytic role of the Convention and its critical contribution to the quest for equality between women and men. It was noted that the roots of the Convention can be traced through the whole history of the United Nations and its efforts to proclaim and codify human rights. International codes, such as the Convention, were not self-implementing and true equality for women required work on many fronts, including building political will, the creation of an enabling environment, awareness-raising and advocacy. Programmes and projects to level the playing field for women in their access to resources, their opportunities in public life, including in politics and the economy, the arts and sciences and the workplace, were required, as were programmes to ensure equality in communities and the home.

8. Speakers emphasized that much progress had been made towards the achievement of women's equality, particularly in regard to equal franchise and political participation. Nonetheless, much more remained to be done as women's human rights were disregarded and violated in many ways in all countries of the world. Statements emphasized the important contribution of past and present members of the Committee, particularly its Chairpersons, in ensuring the implementation of the Convention. In this regard, the Committee's role as an agent for change for women collectively and individually was highlighted. It was also stressed that gender equality was not simply the concern of the Committee and the Commission on the Status of Women but was also important to other bodies of the United Nations as well as of all Member States, communities and individuals.

9. Participants in the round table on the impact of the Convention included past and present members of the Committee. Representatives of United Nations entities, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization also participated. In addition, other special guests, Cecilia Medina-Quiroga, Chairperson, Human Rights Committee (Chile), the Founder of International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW), Arvonne Fraser, and Shanti Dairiam, Director, International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific, made statements.

10. A list of speakers who addressed the commemoration and the round table is contained in annex VI.

C. Attendance

11. Twenty-one members of the Committee attended the session: Naela Gabr attended from 8 to 26 June, Aída González Martínez from 5 to 13 and 16 to 25 June, Savitri Goonesekere from 7 to 17 June, Rosario Manalo from 7 to 11 and 21 to 24 June, Anne Lise Ryel from 10 to 17 June and Carmel Shalev from 7 to 16 June 1999. Not in attendance were Carlota Bustelo García del Real and Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini.

12. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating their terms of office, is contained in annex IV.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

13. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/1999/II/1) at its 426th meeting, on 8 June 1999. The agenda as adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
   Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.

7. Provisional agenda for the twenty-second session.

8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-first session.

E. Report of the pre-session working group

14. The Committee had decided, at its ninth session,[4] to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of questions relating to second and subsequent periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session.

15. At its nineteenth session, the Committee decided that from its twentieth session, in 1999, the pre-session working group would be convened at the end of the session prior to the one at which selected States parties were to report. In order to make a smooth transition to this pattern of work, the Committee decided that the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session would meet during the twentieth session and for a period of up to three days in order to finalize the lists of issues and questions with regard to the periodic reports to be considered by the Committee at its twenty-first session.

16. The following four members, representing different regional groups, participated in the working group: Charlotte Abaka (Africa), Aída González Martínez (Latin America and the Caribbean), Yung-Chung Kim (Asia) and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Europe).

17. The working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the periodic reports of four States parties, namely, Chile, Ireland, Spain, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

18. At its 433rd meeting, on 14 June 1999, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group introduced the report of the group (CEDAW/C/1999/II/CRP.1 and Add.1-4). She informed the Committee that the pre-session working group had before it draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with decision 19/III of the Committee, based on an analytical comparison of current reports of States parties with previous reports, the Committee's discussion thereon and other relevant information, including concluding observations of other treaty bodies. Other reference materials included the concluding comments of other treaty bodies with regard to the States parties under consideration. The pre-session working group also received country-specific information on those States parties whose reports were before the working group from a representative of one entity of the United Nations, as well as from a representative of one non-governmental organization.

19. The Chairperson of the pre-session working group noted that the reports reviewed followed the reporting guidelines of the Committee, including information on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and described the major social, economic and political changes that had occurred since the State party last reported to the Committee. States parties had made significant efforts to implement the Convention through the passage of legislation and other measures, and *de jure* equality between women and men had largely been achieved in those States parties. However, it noted that women in each State party had yet to achieve de facto equality with men and that stereotypical attitudes persisted.

20. The Committee took note of the report of the pre-session working group, and urged the Secretariat to take all possible steps to make entities of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations aware of its changed pattern of work so as to encourage these bodies to provide inputs in the future.

F. Composition and organization of work of the working groups

21. At its 426th meeting, on 8 June 1999, the Committee decided to take up issues under agenda items 5 (Implementation of article 21 of the Convention) and 6 (Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee) as a working group of the whole. The issues it agreed to consider were:

(a) Criteria for exceptional reports;

(b) Responses to observations of States parties on concluding comments;

(c) Rules of procedure;

(d) The implications of the optional protocol to the Convention for the work of the Committee;

(e) The Committee's contribution to the review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

(f) Reports to be considered at the twenty-second and twenty-third sessions of the Committee;

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[4] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/45/38 and Corr.1), paras. 28-31.

(g) Members of the pre-session working group for the twenty-third session of the Committee.

Chapter III

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the Committee

22. Reporting on her activities since the last session of the Committee, the Chairperson indicated that she had attended the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, including meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of an Optional Protocol to the Convention, which were held in parallel with the Commission session. She had also attended the meeting of the Commission acting as preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

23. She reported that in her statement to the Commission, she had highlighted the fact that December 1999 marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention and that, although significant progress had been made in the implementation of the Convention, more remained to be done. She noted that she had urged those Member States which had not ratified the Convention to do so and to accept the amendment to article 20.1 of the Convention relating to its meeting time. She indicated that she had drawn the Commission's attention to the adoption by the Committee of general recommendation 24 on article 12, "Women and health", and had highlighted the Committee's suggestion that the Department of Public Information convey information on the Committee's work to its information centres worldwide.

24. Ms. González Martínez informed the Committee that the Commission had adopted the draft optional protocol to the Convention by consensus, and indicated that she looked forward to its adoption by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, late in 1999. She expressed satisfaction that the Commission had completed its consideration of the remaining critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action — women and health, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Acting as preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly, the Commission had considered, *inter alia*, the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action based on the review of the reports of States parties (E/CN.6/1999/PC/4). The preparatory committee had adopted a draft resolution for submission to the General Assembly that dealt, *inter alia*, with the preparatory process, documentation and the participation of non-governmental organizations, and also addressed the Committee's role in this process. The Chairperson also reported on her meetings with the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Nafis Sadik, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Carol Bellamy, at which strengthened relationships between these entities and the Committee were discussed.

25. Ms. González Martínez indicated that from 26 to 28 May 1999, she had participated in a very valuable workshop on gender integration into the United Nations human rights system, which had been jointly organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women. The workshop aimed to develop tools for human rights mechanisms, including special rapporteurs, working groups and treaty bodies, which would strengthen their ability to take gender issues more fully into account.

26. She also noted that she had attended the meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, which was held from 31 May to 4 June 1999 at Geneva.

27. Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling, Vice Chairperson of the Committee, reported on the Commission on Human Rights which she had attended on behalf of the Chairperson. She noted that for the first time, the Commission had devoted a specific agenda item to the human rights of women. In her statement to the Commission under this item, she had urged universal ratification, the removal of reservations and acceptance of the amendment to article 20.1 of the Convention relating to meeting time. She had also drawn attention to the Committee's statement on reservations adopted at its nineteenth session in July 1998, and its recently concluded general recommendation 24 on article 12, "Women and health". She had also highlighted developments in the Committee's working methods, its increasing openness to non-governmental organizations and the adoption of the draft optional protocol to the Convention by the Commission on the Status of Women.

28. Ms. Schöpp-Schilling concluded her report by describing the round table to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, held during the Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the participation of Anne Anderson,

Chairperson of the Commission of Human Rights, Patricia Flor, Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, Angela E. V. King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and Ms. Schöpp-Schilling.

Chapter IV
Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

A. Introduction

29. At its twenty-first session, the Committee considered the reports submitted by seven States parties under article 18 of the Convention: two initial reports; one combined initial and second report; one combined second and third periodic report; the second and third periodic reports of one State party; and the third and fourth reports of two States parties.

30. As decided at its thirteenth session, in 1994, the Committee prepared concluding comments on the reports of States parties. The Committee's concluding comments, as prepared by the members of the Committee, and a summary of the introductory presentations by the representatives of the States parties are provided below. The summary records provide more detailed information on the Committee's consideration of the reports of the States parties.

B. Consideration of reports of States parties

1. Initial reports

Belize

31. The Committee considered the combined initial and second periodic reports of Belize (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2) at its 432nd, 433rd and 438th meetings, on 14 and 18 June 1999.

(a) Introduction by the State party

32. In introducing the combined initial and second periodic reports, the representative noted that the ratification of the Convention in 1990 had been a catalyst in bringing changes to achieve gender equality in Belize. Since that date, small but consistent steps had been taken to comply with the articles of the Convention. She also noted that the report reflected the combined effort of the Government and non-governmental organizations.

33. The representative placed the implementation of the Convention in the context of the State party's ethnic diversity, noting that Belize's multicultural reality impacted significantly on the development and implementation of laws and policies to end discrimination against women. The majority of the population of Belize lived in urban areas, and 14 per cent of the population were estimated to be immigrants. The country's fertility rate was 4.6 births per woman, making it one of the highest in the region, with approximately 19 per cent of children born to teenage mothers. Fifty-nine per cent of children were born out of wedlock, reflecting a wide range of accepted gender relationships, and requiring policies and laws that were effective in these cultural settings. The country's economic growth rate had been declining from a high of 10.9 per cent between 1987 and 1990 to 1.4 per cent in 1996. She noted that Belize operated a Church-State education system, and that the Church's role in influencing gender attitudes was important.

34. In presenting the status of implementation of the Convention, the representative noted that the Constitution provided protection against discriminatory treatment and required State policies to eliminate economic and social privilege and disparity among citizens on grounds that included sex. She underlined that the current Government was the first to have a women's agenda. No national laws or policies on affirmative action, temporary special measures or quotas existed in the country, and women continued to experience unequal access to opportunities and resources. The Government aimed at achieving a rate of at least 30 per cent women in senior-level positions in the public service. The Political Reform Commission was expected to submit recommendations on political reform in Belize by the end of the year, including on affirmative action and special temporary measures.

35. The representative drew attention to the National Strategic Plan on Gender Equity and Equality, which had been developed to promote implementation of the Government's commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It focused on five priority areas: family violence; employment; health; decision-making; and poverty. Belize would soon adopt the Commonwealth gender management system, as a major component of the Plan. A domestic violence task force had been established and was developing a national plan to address domestic violence and family violence in an integrated and coordinated manner. Legislation on sexual harassment and domestic violence existed and a legislative bill on marital rape was being

introduced in the House of Representatives. A plan of action had been developed for instituting the gender management system in the health sector. She noted that there was growing concern about the level of prostitution in the light of the fact that Belize had the highest rate of transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in Central America.

36. While women comprised 52 per cent of registered voters, and increasingly were candidates for public office, women's representation at the parliamentary level and local government level remained low. For example, out of 29 elected members of the House of Representatives, two were women, and out of 58 municipal representatives, eight were women. The number of women in appointed positions was also below that of men. The National Women's Commission had conducted a study on opportunities for women's political participation, and recommendations would be submitted to the Cabinet and to other governmental and non-governmental bodies.

37. Education in Belize was mandatory at the primary level for children between the ages of 5 and 14. While children under 14 showed a higher male enrolment rate (70.1 per cent) than female (67.2 per cent), the female transition rate from primary to secondary school was, in general, higher (90 per cent) than for male students (78.8 per cent). This pattern was reversed in rural areas, and regional differences were noted. More female students enrolled in tertiary education, with 65 per cent of the students at the University College of Belize being women. It was noted that pregnancy was a major cause of girls discontinuing their education. With individual schools under the Church-State system of education free to expel girls from school because of pregnancy, the Government recognized the need to develop a national policy on teenage pregnancy.

38. While there were no discriminatory labour laws, discriminatory attitudes persisted, resulting in a female workforce that was better educated than the male workforce but earned less on average. Women's participation in the labour force was lower than men's, and women were concentrated in lower-paying jobs, suffered twice the unemployment rate of men and were more likely to experience long-term unemployment. Different minimum wage regulations applied to different types of jobs, and certain types of female-dominated work were not covered by minimum wage regulations. Efforts were under way to improve the employment situation of women, including through training in non-traditional jobs. In contravention of existing labour regulations, schools operating under the Church-State system were allowed to dismiss unwed pregnant women before they qualified for maternity leave.

39. The representative noted that teenage pregnancy was high, with 23 per cent of births having been to women under 19 years of age. Abortion was illegal in Belize, and while the use of contraception was not prohibited, data suggested that the unmet need for contraception was high. Women's HIV/AIDS infection rate was higher than men's, and women affected by AIDS were a major target group of the awareness and prevention programmes of the Government's AIDS task force.

40. Belize had a high number of consensual and common-law unions as opposed to marital unions, but de facto spouses could not claim maintenance after the breakup of a relationship, and their claims to family property were limited, including on the death of the de facto spouse.

41. The representative noted that sexual harassment, access to continuing education for young mothers, equal pay for work of equal value, gender-neutral teaching materials and health services for women required greater effort. Increased compliance with existing laws and policies was also required in a number of areas, including domestic violence and sexual offences. The variety of family types and structures in Belize required that all segments of society take responsibility for narrowing the gap in family laws and practice. Concluding the presentation, the representative indicated that the reporting process had enabled the State party to identify areas of priority action to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

42. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Belize for ratifying the Convention in 1990 without reservations, and for submitting its initial and second periodic reports, as well as supplemental information updating the reports to 1999. It commends the Government for its oral presentation, and for the comprehensive replies to the Committee's questions. It appreciates the open manner in which the report was prepared and presented, and in particular the consultative process with non-governmental and other organizations during the preparation of the report.

43. The Committee commends the Government of Belize for having sent a large delegation, headed by the Minister of Human Development, Women and Youth, and including the First Lady as President of the National Women's Commission, and a representative of the Women's Issues Network. Their participation in presenting the report and in replying to the Committee's questions enhanced the quality of the constructive dialogue between the State party and the Committee. The Committee notes that the report refers to

steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

44. The Committee notes that the Constitution of Belize contains, in its chapter on the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms, protection against discriminatory treatment on the basis of sex. It commends the Government on its commitment to achieving equality for women and the full implementation of the Convention, as reflected in its Women's Agenda 1998 on the legal, socio-political and economic status of women. It welcomes the Government's target of realizing at least 30 per cent women in the top positions of the civil service.

45. The Committee commends the fact that responsibility for women's equality issues rests with a Cabinet Minister. It welcomes the appointment of the National Women's Commission, an advisory body to the Government Minister responsible for women, as the main mechanism for monitoring governmental compliance with the Convention. It also commends the cooperation between governmental machinery and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

46. The Committee welcomes the legislative and policy measures already undertaken, as well as those that are being planned to translate its commitment to gender equality into practice. It welcomes the preparation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender Equity and Equality to implement the Government's commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action. It also welcomes the Domestic Violence Act (1993), the Protection from Sexual Harassment Act (1996) and the Families and Children's Act (1998). It notes with appreciation the establishment of a domestic violence task force, and the Government's ongoing development of a multisectoral national family violence plan.

47. The Committee congratulates the Government on the high level of educational achievement by girls and women, as reflected in the female transition rate from primary to secondary school, and in the high enrolment rate of women (65 per cent) at the University College of Belize.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

48. The Committee is of the view that the Church-State system of education perpetuates an intermingling of the secular and religious spheres, which is a serious impediment to the full implementation of the Convention. The consequences of this system seriously affect girls' and women's right to education and to health, including reproductive health, protected under the Convention.

49. The Committee notes that the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of the population of Belize and the influence of religion in public affairs represent a particular challenge to the Government in the adoption and implementation of legislation for the achievement of equality for all women in Belize, and full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

50. The Committee is concerned about the lack of legislation implementing the constitutional provision of protection against discrimination into the civil code. In particular, the Committee is concerned that article 1 of the Convention, providing a definition of discrimination, covering both direct and indirect discrimination by public as well as private actors, is not fully reflected in legislation.

51. The Committee urges the Government to ensure that the Convention's definition of discrimination is fully incorporated in Belize's legislation, and in particular to ensure that women have effective remedies against indirect discrimination and discrimination by non-State actors.

52. The Committee is seriously concerned about the consequences of the Church-State system of education on girls' and young women's right to education. In this regard, the Committee is concerned that schools are free to expel girls from school because of pregnancy, and that only a few secondary schools allow girls to continue their education after pregnancy. The Committee notes that this violates not only the Convention but also the Constitution of Belize. The Committee is further concerned that under the same system, schools are allowed to dismiss unwed teachers who become pregnant. The Committee considers this also to be in violation of the Convention. While noting with appreciation the Minister's commitment, expressed during the dialogue, to work for change in this regard, the Committee notes the absence of any kind of policy or legislative initiative to reverse this situation.

53. The Committee urges the Government to place the highest priority on eliminating discrimination against women and girls in education because of pregnancy, through both legislative provisions and adequate policy measures. It calls on the Government to strengthen the role of the National Council of Education in protecting girls' and teachers' rights in education. It urges the Government to formulate needed policy and legislative measures to ensure de facto adherence to articles 10, 11 and 12 of the Convention.

54. While welcoming the Government's commitment to establishing a single minimum wage, the Committee expresses its concern that female-dominated jobs currently have a substantially lower minimum wage than jobs held predominantly by men. The Committee is also concerned about the economic situation of women and, especially, their low and falling labour force participation rate, which is indicative of the denial of equal opportunities to women in the labour force. Sixty per cent of women are not in the labour force, and the unemployment rate of women is double that of men. The lack of childcare increases women's disadvantage in the labour market.

55. The Committee encourages the Government to implement a single minimum wage. It recommends that a national childcare policy be developed to support working mothers. It also urges the Government to assess the reasons for women's lower earnings, and for their voluntary departure from the labour market with a view to adopting adequate measures to reverse this trend. The Committee also encourages the Government to intensify its programmes for women entrepreneurs, including access to loans, credits and skill development, as well as to ensure that educational and vocational training opportunities for girls include non-traditional and emerging areas of the economy, such as the information and communications field. The Committee also invites the Government to ensure that women can fully exercise their right to unionize, and that all applicable legislation in this regard is enforced, including in special economic zones. The Committee urges the Ministry of Women's Affairs to initiate dialogue with the Ministry of Labour, with a view to ensuring proper implementation and monitoring of existing labour laws, to enable women to benefit from the employment protection found in these laws.

56. The Committee is concerned at the high incidence of teenage pregnancy, with 23 per cent of births in 1998 being to women under 19 years of age, which, in combination with the prevention of teenage mothers from pursuing their education, is predestined to reduce women's economic opportunities and thus increase their level of poverty. The fact that 60 per cent of births to young women are unplanned is indicative of the lack of adequate family planning information and contraceptive use. The Committee is also concerned at the restrictive abortion laws in place in the State party. It is concerned that, in 1998, so-called "unspecified abortions" (abortions initiated outside the formal health sector) were the fifth cause of hospitalization, and hospitals discriminate against these women in the provision of services and care. In this regard, the Committee notes that the level of maternal mortality due to clandestine abortions may indicate that the Government does not fully implement its obligations to respect the right to life of its women citizens. The Committee is concerned that, while there are no legal barriers, the need for contraception remains unmet.

57. The Committee urges the Government to revise its abortion laws, in particular since according to the information, existing legislation penalizing abortion is not strictly enforced. It also urges the Government to include age-appropriate sex education in school curricula and to conduct awareness campaigns so as to reduce teenage pregnancy rates and to increase girls' and women's life choices. The Committee also urges the Government to implement programmes and policies aiming to increase knowledge about, and availability of, various types of contraceptives, with the understanding that family planning is a joint responsibility of both partners.

58. The Committee is concerned at the high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection in the country.

59. The Committee recommends that the Government implement awareness-raising programmes and policies about the prevention of HIV/AIDS and encourage the use of condoms.

60. The Committee invites the Government to assess the mental health status of women in Belize, and to include information thereon in its next report.

61. Noting the recent revision of the Criminal Code with regard to repealing the need for corroborating evidence in sexual offence cases, including rape, the Committee remains concerned that the existing provision demands higher evidentiary requirements in these cases than for other crimes. The Committee is concerned that this constitutes a serious impediment to women seeking justice in sexual offence cases, and thus to the elimination of discrimination.

62. The Committee recommends that the Criminal Code be kept under review with a view to placing sexual offence and violence on a par with other criminal offences. It also urges the Government to ensure that investigation and prosecution of rape and sexual offence cases are conducted as rigorously as in other criminal cases. The Committee urges the Government to seek, as a priority, the repeal in the Criminal Code of the marital immunity relating to rape.

63. The Committee is concerned at the differential treatment of married, common-law, and "visiting" spouses under common law with regard to the distribution of matrimonial property following the break-up of the relationship.

64. The Committee recommends a revision of this situation, taking into account the examples of civil law systems and community of matrimonial property approaches.

65. The Committee notes a lack of data disaggregated by sex and age, including a breakdown by urban and rural categories, on health issues, illiteracy rates and the situation of immigrant women.

66. The Committee recommends that the Government improve data collection through its census to create a better basis for gender-sensitive policy-making, and to that end that it seek technical and financial support from international agencies.

67. The Committee commends the Government for the introduction of the Commonwealth gender management system to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all governmental policies and programmes, and requests that an assessment of progress made in this regard be included in the next report.

68. The Committee requests that the Government respond in its next periodic report to the specific issues raised in these concluding comments.

69. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Belize of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of Belize, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular, to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Georgia

70. The Committee considered the first periodic report of Georgia (CEDAW/C/GEO/1, Add.1 and Corr.1) at its 427th and 430th meetings, on 8 and 11 June 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.427 and 430).

(a) Introduction by the State party

71. The representative of Georgia described the political, economic and social situation of her country, which is in the process of transition to a market economy. She noted that in spite of the difficulties that this presented, the Government of Georgia attached great importance to the international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Georgia had acceded in 1994, without reservations. She indicated that before and after acceding to the Convention, Georgia had enacted laws to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

72. The representative indicated that the principal State institutions responsible for implementation of policies in the areas addressed in the Convention were the Ministries of Education, Health, Internal Affairs, Social Protection, Labour and Employment, Refugees and Resettlement Issues. Concerns of women and children were dealt with by a group located in the Office of the Ombudsman.

73. The representative highlighted initiatives that had been undertaken after the submission of the initial report in 1998, including, in particular, the establishment, by Presidential decree of 20 February 1998, of the Commission for the Elaboration of a State Policy for the Advancement of Women and the adoption, on 18 June 1998, of the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women for 1998-2000. The representative noted that the establishment of the national machinery, the increase of women's participation in decision-making, the protection of women from violence and the improvement of women's health had been identified as important national priorities and were necessary for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

74. The representative emphasized that owing to the complex financial situation in the country there were limited resources for the implementation of the National Plan of Action. Efforts were being undertaken to find additional sources for its financing.

75. The representative informed the Committee that there were currently approximately 70 non-governmental organizations concerned with women's issues. NGOs had published the text of the Convention in Georgian, while representatives of 52 women's NGOs had taken an active part in the work of the Commission for the Elaboration of a State Policy for the Advancement of Women during April 1999. NGOs had also issued an appeal to political parties to include more women amongst the candidates for parliamentary election, which will take place in November 1999, so that at least 30 per cent of the new Parliament would be composed of women.

76. The representative noted that the current economic and social conditions had brought about a decline in the standard of living, high rates of unemployment, continuing high rates of infant and maternal mortality, increased prostitution, especially amongst young girls, and an increased number of women drug addicts. To address the decline in health-care services, the Government adopted the law on the protection of the health of the population in 1997, and had developed

a draft national policy in the area of health care to the year 2010. The draft emphasized special measures to improve the health of women and children. She also noted that single mothers with under-aged children were entitled to free medical insurance and that their income was tax exempt.

77. The representative also noted that women's situation at the labour market was a serious concern. At the end of 1998, women constituted 55 per cent of the unemployed in the public sector. Among the explanations for women's unemployment was the closing of light, food and chemical industry enterprises that had traditionally been spheres of female employment. Women had also lost their jobs as a result of reforms in the health and education sectors. In addition, a series of sociological surveys had revealed an extremely low level of female participation in entrepreneurial activities. The Government had elaborated a draft national employment programme, which incorporated a comprehensive programme relating to female employment, to address these problems.

78. The representative noted that the Government had recognized that greater efforts were required to address violence, including domestic violence, against women. Persistent traditional stereotypes were obstacles to the establishment of effective monitoring systems and systems to gather data and information about the incidence of violence. A confidential "hotline" had been established, but shelters and services for battered women were limited.

79. The representative mentioned severe conditions in the penitentiary system of Georgia and the necessity for the allocation of additional financial resources for its improvement. Nevertheless, the position of women convicts can be described as "positive discrimination". The conditions in women's facilities are better with respect to sanitary conditions, food and health care.

80. In 1998, the President of Georgia exercised his constitutional right to pardon 90 women convicted for minor criminal offences. The representative noted that there were no cases of execution of women since the repressions of 1937.

81. The representative indicated that the Government of Georgia was particularly concerned about the large number of refugees and displaced persons in the country, of whom the majority were women, children and the elderly. Refugees received State subsidies, and were exempt from income tax and utility bills.

82. The representative concluded by assuring the Committee of the willingness of the Government of Georgia to continue in its efforts to implement the principles of the Convention.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

83. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Georgia for submitting a comprehensive and frank initial report which follows the guidelines of the Committee and includes information the Government received from women's NGOs. It also commends the Government on its oral presentation of additional information to update its submission and for the replies to the questions posed by the Committee, including the provision of some data disaggregated by sex.

84. The Committee commends the fact that Georgia acceded to the Convention without reservations, as well as its efforts to publicize the Convention, such as through the translation and dissemination of the Convention in the Georgian language.

85. The Committee also commends the Government of Georgia for sending a high-level delegation, which was headed by the Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council and Chairperson of the Commission for the Elaboration of State Policy for the Advancement of Women, accompanied by two deputy ministers.

Positive aspects

86. The Committee commends the efforts made by the Government of Georgia to formulate a new constitution, which, *inter alia*, provides for the equality of all people regardless of sex, for ratifying a number of human rights conventions, as well as for being engaged in an ongoing legislative reform in many areas, including the Civil Code, the Law on Nationality and the Patients' Rights Act. It also commends the fact that some training of officials in the field of human rights has started, that the new legislation has been instituted and that new judges have assumed office. These new legal instruments as well as the new personnel are expected to help secure the *de jure* equality of women and men.

87. The Committee commends the Government of Georgia for setting up various institutional mechanisms to advance and strengthen the status of women, such as the establishment of a group within the office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights dealing specifically with the issues of women and children, including the establishment of a confidential hotline for women victims of violence, and of the Commission for the Elaboration of a State Policy for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. It also applauds the fact that a commitment has been made to

set up a department of women's affairs after the next election in the spring of 2000.

88. The Committee commends the Government of Georgia for the recent adoption of the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women for 1998-2000 in order to implement the Government's commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action.

89. The Committee commends efforts of the Government of Georgia in addressing the situation of refugee and displaced women through such measures as State subsidies and exemption from paying taxes and utility bills.

90. The Committee appreciates the efforts of the Government of Georgia for having begun a gender analysis of textbooks used in primary education.

91. The Committee commends the Government's efforts at improving the situation of rural women through land reform, credit unions and special programmes for the mountainous regions.

92. The Committee welcomes the active involvement of NGOs in the implementation of many of the governmental efforts to improve the situation of women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

93. The Committee considers that ongoing economic restructuring creates an obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention. It also notes that the civil war has had a serious impact in some parts of the country, and that as a consequence there are large numbers of internally displaced people, the majority of whom are women and children.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

94. The Committee expresses concern at the lack of real understanding of discrimination against women as contained in the Convention, which includes both direct and indirect discrimination. Such indirect discrimination is reflected, in particular, in the sex segregation of the labour market and in the high maternal death rate. It further notes the absence of comprehensive strategies and policies directed at indirect discrimination and the lack of policies and strategies to combat discrimination in the private sector.

95. The Committee recommends incorporation of the principle of the equality of women and men in the constitution. It further recommends that education and awareness-raising campaigns be initiated utilizing, *inter alia*, the large number of women in mass media and education. Efforts should be made to obtain a clear understanding of indirect discrimination so as to accelerate its elimination and to put in place new legislation addressing the issue of indirect discrimination. Training of lawmakers and the judiciary, health professionals and the mass media in this respect is also recommended.

96. The Committee is concerned that the National Action Plan has not yet been implemented. This Plan addresses major areas for the improvement of women's situation, including the issues of gender evaluation of all legislation; the collection of sex-disaggregrated data; the enhancement of the role of women in decision-making processes; strengthening women's role in the economy and their position in the urban and agricultural labour markets in order to reduce current poverty levels; including women in peace negotiations and making special efforts for women refugees and victims of armed conflicts; efforts to protect women's health; and securing the human rights of women through information, training and publication of relevant texts. The Committee recommends that measures be put in place to initiate implementation of this plan.

97. The Committee expresses concern that a number of concepts and provisions that are beneficial to the advancement of the equality of women which were formerly in use are currently being disregarded.

98. The Committee recommends the review of the negative attitudes towards such concepts and provisions such as, for example, temporary special measures, including quotas in the areas of political participation and in employment.

99. The Committee notes with concern the persistence of a patriarchal culture, the prevalence of stereotyped roles of women in Government policies in the family and in public life based on patterns of behaviour and attitudes that overemphasize the role of women as mothers. It also notes with concern that the report itself promotes the role of man as breadwinner.

100. The Committee recommends comprehensive measures to eliminate gender stereotypes through a number of efforts, including the review of textbooks beyond primary education, the sensitization of teachers, the creation of awareness and understanding through research into the rich heritage of women's positive role in Georgian history for policy planning and as role models, and the formulation of positive symbolic messages at the highest political level concerning the equality of women in all areas of life.

101. The Committee notes that the report provides very little information on the issue of violence and on gender-based violence in particular. It expresses concern that there may well be a high level of violence against women in Georgia. The Committee is also concerned that the current policy of not criminalizing procuring for the purpose of

prostitution has created an environment in which women and young children are not protected from sexual exploitation in sex tourism, cross-border trafficking, and pornography. It is also concerned at the increase in prostitution and trafficking of women, especially among girls, which is largely due to their poverty.

102. The Committee recommends that laws specifically addressing violence against women and criminalizing rape in marriage be put in place. It also recommends that Georgia consider amendment of the Penal Code to impose severe penalties for sexual violence and abuse of women and girls. It also recommends the design and implementation of policies and programmes to address violence against women. In particular, it recommends the establishment of a network of crisis centres and the expansion of consultative services so as to render the necessary assistance to women victims, especially girls, both in urban and rural areas. Programmes of rehabilitation and reintegration should be developed for the victims of sexual exploitation in prostitution and cross-border trafficking. The Committee urges gender-sensitive training for law enforcement officials and agencies and collection of information and statistical data. It also recommends that advantage be taken of the fact that women make up the majority of judges and journalists. In all these efforts, active collaboration with national and international NGOs should be sought, in view of their extensive experiences in addressing these issues.

103. The Committee is concerned that there have been no efforts to employ temporary special measures to improve the situation of women in various areas.

104. The Committee recommends that the Government consider introducing a broad range of measures within the framework of article 4.1 of the Convention to accelerate the improvement of the position of women in all areas and particularly in regard to political representation.

105. The Committee expresses concern at the number of women living in poverty, and the increasing representation of women among the unemployed, due to the differential impact on women of the restructuring and privatization of the economy, to women being clustered in certain sectors of the labour market and the persistence of sex-role stereotypes in the labour market. It is concerned that poverty and unemployment of women will also have a long-term negative impact on the health of women and children.

106. The Committee recommends the implementation of comprehensive measures aimed at the improvement of women's economic status through training and retraining, as well as the introduction of quotas for women in the governmental job creation schemes. It also recommends programmes to encourage women to participate in modern sectors of the national economy, as well as in entrepreneurship.

107. The Committee is concerned at the persistence of a gap between the wages of women and men, even in the public sector.

108. The Committee urges the Government of Georgia to identify the causes of the wage gap, particularly between female- and male-dominated public labour market sectors, and recommends consideration of innovative measures, such as the introduction of provisions for equal pay for work of comparable value.

109. The Committee expresses concern that existing occupational health standards relating to women will result in discrimination against them in a labour market that is based on a market economy.

110. The Committee recommends that existing occupational health standards be amended and that all such standards that directly or indirectly discriminate against women be repealed.

111. The Committee is concerned about the situation with regard to women's health and health care, including the high rate of infant and maternal mortality and the high number of abortions, which are used as a means of contraception. It also expresses concern that the privatization of health care has negatively affected women by restricting their access to the necessary medical services and reducing jobs for women as nurses and doctors.

112. The Committee recommends the enhancement of family planning programmes and the dissemination of various forms of contraceptives, and that Georgia take advantage of assistance available from international agencies in this regard. It also recommends the creation of insurance plans that sufficiently cover women patients in hospitals and in ambulatory medical care.

113. The Committee notes with concern the lack of statistical data in the report, as well as the lack of reference to the general recommendations of the Committee. The Committee recommends that the Government of Georgia devote special attention to the achievement of lasting peace, and to this end that it ensure that women are fully involved in the peace process. It also recommends that the needs of internally displaced people, particularly women and children, be given special attention.

114. The Committee recommends the collection of sex-disaggregated data as the basis for any planning for the advancement of women and asks that they be included in the next report. It also recommends a thorough study of the

nmittee's general recommendations and the incorporation heir contents in future policy planning.

. The Committee recommends that the Government of orgia provide further information in its next periodic ort, describing measures taken to address the concerns lined in these concluding comments.

. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in orgia of the present concluding comments in order to ke Georgian people, and particularly the Government, ninistrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have n taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women the further steps required in that regard. The Committee o requests the Government to continue to disseminate lely, and in particular to women's and human rights anizations, the Convention, the Committee's general ommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the tform for Action.

Nepal

7. The Committee considered the initial report of Nepal EDAW/C/NPL/1) at its 434th and 439th meetings, on 15 18 June 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.434 and 439).

) Introduction by the State party

. The representative of Nepal informed the Committee t there was an addendum to the initial report of Nepal, ch highlighted developments since the submission of the ort in May 1997. He noted that in the past nine years, pal had ratified several international treaties, including se dealing with human rights. In conformity with the visions of those instruments, Nepal had abolished the th penalty. The Nepal Treaties Act of 1990 provided that provisions of an international treaty to which Nepal was arty, which was inconsistent with a national law, should ersede the national law to the extent of such onsistency. Several decisions of the Supreme Court had o determined that such inconsistencies should be resolved ccordance with treaties.

. The representative informed the Committee that human nts in Nepal had developed on the basis of equality. He ed that part three of the Constitution of Nepal addresses damental human rights. Despite those constitutional visions, both *de jure* and de facto discrimination still sted in Nepal. Statutes based on traditional practices and toms that were discriminatory and inconsistent with the sent Constitution still existed, including the *Muluki Ain*, ich restricted women from independent use of their perty and inheritance of parental property.

120. The representative noted that although women constituted 9.2 million, or 50.13 per cent of the total population of 18.5 million, Nepalese women faced sociocultural and economic discrimination and there were no female ministers in the present cabinet of Nepal. He informed the Committee that Nepal was multi-ethnic, multilingual and diverse, thus the status of women varied between ethnic communities. However, the traditional system of most communities in Nepal was patriarchal. The representative noted that inequality between women and men arose because of poverty, illiteracy, traditional norms and stereotypes nurtured by the patriarchal system. He informed the Committee that half of the total population of Nepal still lived in abject poverty and nearly 90 per cent lived in rural areas.

121. The representative drew attention to the eighth plan of the National Planning Commission and the provisions of article 11 (2) (3) of the Constitution, which provided for temporary special measures so that women-specific targeted development policies could be adopted in order to integrate women in the national development programmes and ensure participation in socio-economic and political sectors. Some of the programmes established under the eighth plan include the hiring of 4,150 teachers as well as free education for females. In the area of health, training programmes geared towards the improvement of the local delivery system were organized for maternal and child health-care workers, female health volunteers and traditional birth attendants. Recognizing that 57 per cent of Nepalese women were engaged in agriculture, the Government established a Women Farmer's Division within the Ministry of Agriculture. Women-targeted income-generating programmes were also set up in the area of forestry and industry. In the area of trafficking, the representative noted that Nepal had established a self-reliance and rehabilitation programme for victims of trafficking and vulnerable girls. The victims underwent a six-month training programme.

122. The representative noted that despite efforts to improve the situation of women in Nepal, challenges remained with regard to policies and programmes. These included the lack of an effective monitoring and evaluation system, a high maternal mortality rate of 53.9 to every 10,000 births. He also noted that the average life expectancy of Nepalese women was 53.4 years, while that of the men was 55.9 years. The female literacy rate in Nepal was about 30 per cent, compared with 66 per cent for men.

123. The representative informed the Committee of Nepal's long-term concept, which dealt with the creation of a developed society on the basis of gender equality, women's empowerment and participation through gender

mainstreaming in all sectors of national development. The ninth plan, 1997-2002, was directed at gender mainstreaming, including through the assessment of women's contribution to household labour within the national accounting system, development of gender-disaggregated indicators to measure women's participation in development and effective coordination between agencies and bodies engaged in the field of women's development.

124. With regard to the elimination of gender inequality, the representative informed the Committee that laws and regulations that discriminated between women and men would be reviewed by a task force set up under the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare. The Ministry had formulated a national plan of action for the empowerment of Nepalese women. The plan of action was designed to create awareness among planners, policy makers and politicians on gender and development issues. The Ministry would increase the number of women in Government and public service sectors through classes organized by the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

125. In reviewing the Beijing Platform for Action, the Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment National Work Plan 1997, which addressed the 12 critical areas of the Platform, was formulated. The representative informed the Committee that a national fund, which would provide access to credit for Nepalese women, would also be established. Concluding the presentation, the representative noted that Nepalese women still suffered discrimination, but Nepal was committed to the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

126. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Nepal for submitting its initial report, which follows the guidelines of the Committee. It also commends the Government on the addendum to the initial report, which updates the report and for the oral presentation of additional information. The Committee notes, however, that the report does not include sufficient reliable statistical data disaggregated by sex, and provides insufficient information relating to the implementation of a number of articles in the Convention.

127. The Committee welcomes the fact that Nepal ratified the Convention without reservations in 1990 shortly after it established a system of multi-party democracy.

128. The Committee commends the Government of Nepal for sending a high-level delegation, headed by the Secretary of Ministry of Law and Justice.

Positive aspects

129. The Committee commends the efforts made by the Government of Nepal to enact the new 1990 Constitution, prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination based on sex, and establishing an independent judiciary.

130. The Committee notes with satisfaction that as a result of the 1997 Self-Governance Act, approximately 40,000 women are now involved in local government.

131. The Committee commends the Government for the Basic Primary Education Programme, launched in 1992, which is directed at the improvement of women's and girls' education and contributes to the advancement of women's social status, as well as playing a key role in strategies for poverty alleviation.

132. The Committee welcomes the creation of the Women Development Division under the Ministry of Local Development to, *inter alia*, execute two central micro-credit programmes for women and to implement programmes on income generation and community development.

133. The Committee commends the Government of Nepal for the adoption of the ninth plan which places women's issues in the mainstream of development. It also welcomes Nepal's commitments to reviewing existing legislation and enacting appropriate laws in accordance with international instruments. The Committee also commends the national plan of action for gender equality and the empowerment of women formulated by the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare and endorsed by the ninth plan.

134. The Committee notes with appreciation that many NGOs play an active role in the implementation of the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

135. The Committee notes that different cultural practices and traditions and persisting highly patriarchal values and norms affecting all spheres of life are impediments to the full implementation of the Convention.

136. The Committee notes that terrorist insurgencies and the frequent governmental changes causing political instability in the young democracy of Nepal have also been obstacles to the full implementation of the Convention.

137. The Committee considers that the widespread poverty in rural and remote areas and the gap between the situation of women in urban areas and those in rural and remote areas as a major obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

138. The Committee is concerned that the Government has not taken sufficient action to reflect the provisions of the Convention in domestic laws, or to amend prevailing discriminatory laws. The Committee is also concerned about the interpretation of discriminatory laws by the Supreme Court and the Court's view that if any laws do not conform with culture and tradition, society will be disrupted.

139. The Committee recommends that a definition of discrimination in compliance with article 1 of the Convention be included in the relevant laws. The Committee also urges the Government to amend, as a matter of priority, discriminatory laws on property and inheritance, the laws on marriage, nationality and birth registration, the Bonus Act, and discriminatory criminal laws, including the new law on abortion.

140. The Committee is concerned at the very low literacy rate amongst women, especially in rural and remote areas, and the persistence of both a quantitative and qualitative gender gap at all levels of education. It is also concerned that the Basic Primary Education Programme covers only a small number of girls and women, and that illiterate women are systematically barred from vocational training because of the minimum educational requirements for entry into vocational centres. The Committee is also concerned that school curricula and textbooks convey gender stereotypes and entrench a vision of male superiority.

141. The Committee urges the Government to introduce and implement policies and programmes for free and compulsory education for all girls at the primary level; vocational and skill development training for income generation, especially for marginalized rural women; and the facilitation of women's access to non-traditional and non-stereotypical education. The Committee also recommends that the Government take concrete measures to increase the number of women in higher education, in particular in non-traditional fields. The Committee also recommends that school curricula and textbooks be reviewed in order to eliminate gender stereotypes.

142. The Committee urges the Government to take effective measures, including incentives, to ensure that parents comply with the obligation of compulsory education. It recommends that massive social awareness campaigns be undertaken to encourage women's education.

143. The Committee is concerned that there is a need to ensure greater gender sensitivity, knowledge and training in gender-related issues among groups charged with implementation of policies and programmes to achieve equality for women.

144. The Committee urges the Government to launch gender sensitization and advocacy programmes aimed at the civil service and opinion leaders, political decision makers, health professionals and law enforcement officials so as to ensure that a clear understanding of the obligations under the Convention is achieved.

145. The Committee notes that the report does not include sufficient reliable statistical data disaggregated by sex, and provides insufficient information relating to the implementation of a number of articles in the Convention.

146. The Committee recommends that statistical data disaggregated by sex be included in the next report and that information be provided with regard to all articles of the Convention.

147. The Committee expresses concern at the current law, which criminalizes abortion, including in cases of pregnancy through rape or incest. The Committee considers that the current law on abortion contributes both to the high maternal mortality rate in Nepal and the higher number of women prisoners in that State. It is also concerned that the proposed amendments to the current law continue to be restrictive, allowing abortion only when the mother's health is in danger.

148. The Committee urges the Government to revise existing legislation and to reconsider the proposed amendments so as to provide services for safe abortions. The Committee recommends that the Government prioritize prevention of unwanted pregnancy through family planning services and sex education. In these efforts, the Committee suggests that the Government take account of general recommendation 24 on article 12, "Women and health".

149. The Committee is concerned about the high incidence of prostitution and the increase in trafficking in women and girls, in particular for the purpose of prostitution. It expresses concern that girl children are taken across the border for the purpose of child marriage.

150. The Committee urges the Government to take effective steps to review existing legislative provisions on prostitution and trafficking in women and their compatibility with the Convention, and to ensure their full implementation and compliance. It also calls upon the Government to initiate regional and bilateral cooperation, taking into account subregional, regional and international agreements and standards on this issue. It urges the Government to review its criminal code, to punish persons who procure women for prostitution or for trafficking, to establish repatriation and rehabilitation programmes, and to support services for victims of trafficking.

151. The Committee is concerned that, although the Constitution guarantees that political parties should reserve for women at least 5 per cent of places on electoral lists of candidates for elections to the House of Representatives, and that at least three seats should be reserved for women in the National Assembly, representation of women in the National Legislature remains very low. It is also concerned with the very low participation of women in government administration.

152. The Committee recommends that the Government take appropriate steps, including the introduction of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention, to ensure greater participation by women at all levels of decision-making.

153. The Committee expresses concern that traditional customs and practices detrimental to women and girls, such as child marriage, dowry, polygamy, *deuki* (a tradition of dedicating girls to a god or goddess, who become "temple prostitutes", which persists, despite the prohibition of the practice by the Children's Act) *badi* (the ethnic practice of forcing young girls to become prostitutes) and discriminatory practices that derive from the caste system are still prevalent.

154. The Committee recommends that the Government, in coordination with civil society, including women's groups and non-governmental organizations, initiate policies and programmes to eliminate discriminatory cultural attitudes towards women and girls. It recommends implementation of an extensive public awareness campaign in order to increase the understanding of gender issues and human rights of women amongst the people of Nepal.

155. The Committee is concerned that women are concentrated in low-skill jobs. It is concerned about both the gender disparity in wages and the unequal income distribution caused by the concentration of the vast majority of women in unpaid family work.

156. The Committee urges the Government to adopt labour legislation prohibiting wage discrimination. It also recommends that the Government introduce special measures to encourage women to participate in all sectors of employment, and develop special credit facilities for women to enable them to establish small enterprises and that it introduce special measures to encourage women to participate in all sectors of employment.

157. The Committee notes with concern that there is little information on the situation of women in the rural areas, where the majority of the population lives and where the majority of women are engaged in the agricultural sector.

158. The Committee requests the Government to include in its next report more information and data on the situation of rural women, as well as minority women, in particular with respect to their access to public services.

159. The Committee requests the Government to respond to the concerns in these concluding comments in its next report.

160. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Nepal of the present concluding comments in order to make the people, and in particular government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality of women, as well as the further steps that are required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

2. Combined second and third periodic reports

Ireland

161. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Ireland (CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3) at its 440th and 441st meetings, on 21 June 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.440 and 441).

(a) Introduction by the State party

162. The representative of Ireland began his introduction by emphasizing Ireland's involvement of women in politics, giving the example of the election of their second successive woman President, which followed an election in which four of the five candidates were women. Although the number of women in Parliament was still lower than desired, the Second Commission on the Status of Women had made several recommendations to the Government and political parties were seeking to increase women's representation. The representative explained that the 1998 Employment Equality Act outlawed discrimination on nine grounds, including gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation and membership in the "traveller" community.

163. The representative described the role of women in the labour force, noting the participation of women in the civil service and policies with regard to sexual harassment, childcare, parental leave, work sharing and part-time work. He noted that childcare was seen as one of the most important ways of reconciling work and family life, and a

working group had been established to report on that. He described the national development plan on equal opportunities between women and men.

164. The representative noted that the educational system enabled each person to fulfil her or his potential, and was reinforced by the Education Act of 1998, which made specific provisions for the promotion of equality of access to and participation in education. The Equality Committee of the Department of Education and Science had been established to monitor and coordinate activities relating to equality of opportunity for girls and boys in education. It was also developing strategies for mainstreaming gender equality and had also addressed the under-representation of women in decision-making positions in education. Following research and a series of pilot courses designed specifically for women interested in seeking promotion to decision-making positions, more women had been appointed to senior positions, but the Government recognized that more women in top management positions were still required.

165. The representative described the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and its key objective of reducing inequalities and focusing on the gender dimensions of poverty. Single-parent and single-adult households were given particular attention in the Strategy. The representative noted that women in both urban and rural areas experienced problems arising from poverty and marginalization, and that women's and community groups had an important role in tackling those problems.

166. The Committee was informed that Ireland's five reservations to the Convention were being kept under regular review. The reservation to article 13 (b) and (c) concerning access to financial credit and recreational facilities would be lifted when an equal status bill, which would prohibit discrimination in areas other than employment, was enacted. The removal of the reservation relating to contracts entered into by women was also expected.

167. The representative informed the Committee that in 1993, the Government had established a task force to examine the needs of "travellers", which had resulted in a report containing over 300 recommendations. The report recommended the examination of gender implications in order to ascertain how policies and practices contributed to or hampered progress for "traveller" women. Proposals for future initiatives would be monitored and resources would be made available for the collection and collation of data. The representative noted that the health of "traveller" women was a priority area, that outreach services and on-site and special clinics had been introduced or were in the planning stages and that the Primary Health Care for Travellers Project established in 1994 trained "traveller" women in the delivery of primary health-care services.

168. The representative indicated that measures, including the Refugee Act of 1996, had been introduced to deter discrimination against refugees and asylum seekers. Measures to address vulnerable categories of refugees, such as victims of trauma, torture or rape, had also been introduced.

169. The representative informed the Committee about the new women's prison that had been built to replace existing inadequate accommodation. Education, work-training and physical education facilities for female prisoners had also been introduced.

170. The representative indicated to the Committee that in order to meet women's health needs fully, the Plan for Women's Health, 1997-1999, had been developed. Its four main objectives include maximizing the health and social gains for Irish women; creating a woman-friendly health service; increasing consultation with, and representation of, women in health services; and enhancing the contribution of the health services to promoting women's health in the developing world. The plan had been supplemented by the establishment of a Women's Health Council, which provided for women's participation in the policy-making processes.

171. The representative noted that violence against women continued to be of grave concern to the Government, and had led to the establishment in 1997 of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women. Its objectives included the development of public-awareness campaigns, criminal justice intervention, services and support. Regional Committees on Violence had been formed in the eight Health Board regions and were designed to draw together the services available to women to provide a sympathetic and consolidated approach to the treatment of victims of violence. Rape crisis centres were regarded as vital for the victims of rape and sexual abuse.

172. In concluding, the representative indicated that Ireland had supported a strong optional protocol during negotiations, and expected to ratify it as soon as the protocol was adopted and opened for signature, accession or ratification.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

173. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Ireland for submitting its combined second and third periodic report, containing data disaggregated by sex. It commends the Government for the comprehensive written replies to the Committee's questions and its oral

presentation which provided additional information on the current situation of the implementation of the Convention. It appreciates the manner in which the State party identified areas for further progress.

174. The Committee commends the Government of Ireland for having sent a large delegation, headed by the Second Secretary of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and including officials from various branches of Government. Their participation enhanced the quality of the constructive dialogue between the State party and the Committee. The Committee notes that information was provided in the combined second and third periodic report, as well as in the written replies, on Ireland's follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

175. The Committee commends the Government on its steady progress in withdrawing reservations entered to the Convention upon ratification, and on the fact that remaining reservations are kept under review.

176. The Committee welcomes legislative changes since the consideration of the initial report in 1989, including the adoption of the Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act (1990), the Criminal Justice Act (1993), the Domestic Violence Act (1996), the Parental Leave Act (1998), the Education Act (1998) and the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the forthcoming entry into force of the Equal Status Bill, published in April 1999. In particular, the Committee welcomes the amendment to the Constitution allowing for the introduction of divorce, and the subsequent adoption of the Family Law (Divorce) Act of 1996. The Committee also notes the pending establishment of an independent statutory-based Human Rights Commission, as well as consideration of the incorporation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms into Irish law.

177. The Committee notes with appreciation the appointment, in 1993, of a Cabinet Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, responsible for institutional, administrative and legal reform and for coordinating and monitoring government policies with regard to women's equality. It welcomes the Government's commitment to mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, and the regular scrutiny of all governmental proposals for their impact on women. It also welcomes the issuance of guidelines for dealing with sexual harassment in the civil service, and the adoption of a plan of action on elderly women.

178. The Committee notes with appreciation that women have benefited from a strong economic growth rate in recent years and have entered the labour market in unprecedented numbers. The Committee welcomes the Government's commitment to reaching the target of a minimum of 40 per cent of women on each State board, and the increase to over 33 per cent of Irish women in the elections to the European Parliament in June 1999.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

179. The Committee considers that the persistence of the emphasis on the role of women as mothers and caregivers tends to perpetuate sex role stereotypes and constitutes a serious impediment to the full implementation of the Convention. The lack of emphasis, in public perception and in State policy, on the shared responsibility of men for family and caring work further compounds the situation of de facto inequality of women.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

180. The Committee notes that although Ireland is a secular State, the influence of the Church is strongly felt not only in attitudes and stereotypes but also in official State policy. In particular, women's right to health, including reproductive health, is compromised by this influence. The Committee notes that Ireland did not enter a reservation to article 12 upon ratification of the Convention. The Committee recommends implementation of this article in full.

181. The Committee expresses its concern that, notwithstanding recent favourable economic growth, which has led to women's labour force participation reaching 40 per cent, there is a considerable age gap in that participation, with almost no women over the age of 50 years in paid employment. It is also concerned that women hold the majority of part-time jobs and earn less than men, and that little progress is being made in assessing and valuing work of comparable value.

182. The Committee urges the Government to ensure that legislation and policies create the structural and systemic framework that will lead to women's long-term participation in the labour force on a basis of equality with men. In particular, the Committee urges the Government to take further measures to reduce the pay gap in women's earnings, taking into account developments that have refined the concepts of equal pay for work of comparable value, and to assess the impact of cultural stereotypes and women's reproductive responsibilities on the continuing pay gap.

183. While welcoming the Government's recent focus on developing and adopting family-friendly, childcare and parental leave policies to facilitate women's participation in the labour market, the Committee expresses its concern that these policies continue to place primary responsibility for family work and childcare on women, rather than emphasizing the shared responsibility of men and women.

184. The Committee urges the Government to monitor and review its work and family life policies and legislation so as to ensure that they create incentives and opportunities for women and men to share, equally, paid work outside the home and unpaid family work. In particular, the Committee recommends that such regulations and policies be accompanied by awareness-raising and educational efforts aimed at changing attitudes concerning women's traditional roles and responsibilities for child and family care. It also recommends that parental leave regulations be assessed with a view to providing for paid parental leave so as to create an incentive for men to take advantage of their legal entitlements.

185. While noting with appreciation the existence of a Plan for Women's Health, 1997-1999, and the establishment of a Women's Health Council, as well as the wide availability of various programmes to improve women's health, the Committee is concerned that, with very limited exceptions, abortion remains illegal in Ireland. Women who wish to terminate their pregnancies need to travel abroad. This creates hardship for vulnerable groups, such as female asylum seekers who cannot leave the territory of the State.

186. The Committee urges the Government to facilitate a national dialogue on women's reproductive rights, including on the restrictive abortion laws. It also urges the Government to further improve family planning services and the availability of contraception, including for teenagers and young adults. It also urges the Government to promote the use of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

187. Noting that a National Steering Committee on Violence against Women has been established to develop a national strategy to this issue, the Committee is concerned that no comprehensive and multidimensional strategy has yet been adopted to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

188. The Committee requests the inclusion in the next report of comprehensive statistical information on the types and frequency of violence against women, including domestic violence, the number of complaints brought by women and the results of investigations. The Committee also requests detailed information on sexual harassment against women in the workplace, and on means of redress available to and used by women and the results thereof.

189. The Committee notes with concern that women continue to be under-represented in public and political life, and that structural and attitudinal reasons, including limiting cultural and social values, difficulties in reconciling family life, paid employment and political tasks, have been identified among the reasons for this low representation.

190. The Committee urges the Government to make full use of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention to increase women's participation in politics and decision-making. It also recommends that the Equal Status Bill (1999) be implemented to provide for temporary special measures to overcome systemic and indirect discrimination against women. The Committee recommends awareness-raising and educational measures to redress cultural stereotypes, increase men's sharing of domestic work and encourage mentoring, networking and support systems to facilitate women's entry into public life.

191. The Committee recommends that the impact of such legislation and policies on achieving equality for women be rigorously monitored and regularly assessed and evaluated with a view to taking corrective action when and if necessary. The Committee requests that detailed information on these policies, including data disaggregated by sex, a discussion of methodologies and of indicators used and of their impact on women's equality, be included in the next report.

192. The Committee encourages the Government to ensure that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is included in the terms of reference of the Human Rights Commission, and that the Commission is made up of a balanced number of women and men.

193. The Committee expresses its concern about the continuing existence, in article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution, of concepts that reflect a stereotypical view of the role of women in the home and as mothers. It is aware that amendments to this article are being considered by the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reform. The Committee also notes with concern that the constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination does not extend to private, non-State actors.

194. The Committee emphasizes that article 5 of the Convention stipulates that all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women be taken, with a view to the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices that are based on stereotyped roles for men and women. The

Committee calls upon the Government to ensure that the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reform is fully aware of Ireland's obligations under the Convention, including article 5.

195. The Committee requests that the next report provide comprehensive information, including statistical data covering life expectancy, literacy rates, employment and property rights, on the situation of rural women. Noting with concern that a recent poverty survey did not provide data disaggregated by sex, the Committee requests that a detailed analysis be included in the next report of the causes, forms and extent of women's poverty and its intergenerational perpetuation, as well as of the impact of measures to reduce and eliminate women's poverty in general and that of vulnerable groups of women in particular.

196. The Committee is concerned about the lack of sex-disaggregated data on members of the academic profession with respect to different fields and levels. This is necessary to assess women's advancement in higher education. It is also concerned about the inadequacy of information provided on women's studies in tertiary education in Ireland.

197. The Committee requests that the next report provide sex-disaggregated data on academic personnel in the universities, as well as information on the activities and programmes on women's studies centres, particularly with respect to whether or not they grant degrees and to what extent gender and women's studies courses are integrated into the curricula of conventional disciplines in tertiary education.

198. Noting the recent and extensive legislative developments in Ireland as they pertain to women's equality, the Committee also notes that there is a need for continuing and ongoing training of the judiciary, including magistrates, on gender sensitivity.

199. The Committee encourages the Government to ensure, through various means and channels, that gender training is not only an integral part of Law School curricula but that it is also part of the continuing education of legal professionals and the judiciary. It also encourages the Government to ensure that an adequate number of women are selected for appointment to specialized courts, such as family courts.

200. The Committee requests that the Government responds in its next periodic report to the specific issues raised in these concluding comments.

201. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Ireland of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of Ireland, and in particular government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

3. Second and third periodic reports

Chile

202. The Committee considered the second and third periodic reports of Chile (CEDAW/C/CHI/2 and CEDAW/C/CHI/3) at its 442nd and 443rd meetings, held on 22 June 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.442 and 443).

(a) Introduction by the State party

203. In her statement, the representative of the Government of Chile described the social, cultural and political context in which the Government of Chile was implementing the Convention and informed the Committee of the institutional arrangements made since the restoration of democracy. She recalled that Chile had established the first governmental mechanism for women in the Office of the President of the Republic in 1949. She stressed that the establishment of the National Office for Women's Affairs (SERNAM) in 1991 had been a decisive factor in incorporating a gender perspective into public policy and consolidating the principle of the equality of Chilean women, with effect throughout the country through regional offices.

204. Referring to the activities carried out by SERNAM in the legislative sphere, the representative stressed that one of the milestones of the century in terms of the status of Chilean women was the recently approved reform of the Constitution which established the legal equality of women and men at the highest legislative level by amending articles 1 and 19. With regard to family law, she referred to the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act of 1994; in order to facilitate the implementation of that Act, an inter-ministerial commission on the prevention of domestic violence, coordinated by SERNAM, had been established. She drew attention to the Act issued in October 1998 which, in an important reform for the future of the boys and girls of today, amended the Civil Code and other pieces of legislation with respect to filiation.

205. The representative said that, in order to guarantee equality between husbands and wives at the personal level and in respect of property, the 1994 Act established the

sharing of assets acquired during a marriage as an alternative marital property regime.

206. The representative drew attention to the implementation of the Equal Opportunity Plan for Women, 1994-1999, which had been incorporated into the Government's programme in 1995 and had become the main tool for implementing the Convention and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, in 1995. She also singled out for mention the proposals for policies on equal opportunities for rural women which SERNAM had drawn up in conjunction with civil society.

207. The representative of Chile stressed the commitment of the democratic Governments to overcome extreme poverty in Chile and in that respect reported that SERNAM had initiated a vocational training programme for low-income women, particularly women heads of household, which had helped to reduce the number of poor households in Chile, through the economic contribution of women.

208. The representative also stressed that significant legal changes had been made and major programmatic action carried out in the labour sphere, both in respect of access and improvement of the conditions for the entry of women into the labour market, and in the promotion of shared family responsibilities and the protection of maternity. She said that SERNAM was continuing to carry out the programme for temporary women workers in order to bring the public sectors into line with their needs and provide them with leadership training so as to increase their visibility. Among the legislative advances, she mentioned the amendment of the Labour Code to provide day care services to working women and the protection of maternity leave for domestic workers.

209. The representative drew attention to the considerable progress made as regards the health of Chilean women and girls, stressing the reduction in maternal mortality to 0.2 per 100,000 live births. She acknowledged the incidence of teenage pregnancy and mentioned the special days for community dialogue on emotional health and sexuality, based on a new educational approach, which SERNAM had launched, in cooperation with other State bodies, for the purpose of preventing such situations. She also said that induced abortion was a public health problem in Chile, where it was estimated that one abortion was performed for every four pregnancies, and where abortion was the second leading cause of maternal mortality, even though Chilean law prohibited and penalized all types of abortions.

210. The representative also informed the Committee of the progress made in the political participation of women in various bodies and institutions in the three areas of State power, especially the grass-roots level, although that participation remained very limited in decision-making bodies, such as the Supreme Court or the Senate. She referred to the efforts made by various groups with a view to ensuring the increased participation of women in the Congress. She also reported that the criteria of equality of opportunities for male and female employees had been incorporated in various government ministries.

211. The representative referred to the efforts made by SERNAM to achieve the institutionalization of the gender dimension in the public policies of the State. In that respect, she indicated that SERNAM had carried out a growing task of sensitization and training in the gender perspective for public officials and had implemented programmes for the dissemination of women's rights by establishing women's rights information centres in all regions of Chile.

212. In conclusion, the representative pointed out that the Government of Chile was in the process of elaborating another Equal Opportunity Plan for Women, which would cover the 10-year period 2000-2010, in order to ensure that policies on equality were not dependent on the Government in office but rather became policies of State. She stressed that the Plan would be prepared with the participation of all sectors of Chilean society.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

213. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Chile for its second and third periodic reports, and, in particular, for including in the third periodic report data requested by the Committee during its consideration of the initial report. The Committee commends the comprehensive and detailed replies to its questions, which were accompanied by statistical data prepared with input from the ministries and government offices responsible for the areas in question and from a group of women's non-governmental organizations and thematic networks. The Committee also appreciated the oral presentation, which demonstrated with transparency and sincerity the progress achieved, the obstacles encountered and the constraints which have still to be overcome before the *de jure* and de facto equality of Chilean women is achieved. In both cases, the Committee gained a broader picture of the overall status of the implementation of the Convention.

214. The Committee pays tribute to the Government of Chile for its decision to send a delegation headed by the Director-Minister of the National Office for Women's Affairs and composed of experts in the areas of the

Convention. The Committee notes that both the third periodic report and the answers given to Committee members' questions include information on fulfilment of the commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

215. The Committee congratulates the Government of Chile on the adoption of a number of legislative reforms, including the amendment of articles 1 and 19 of the Constitution of the Republic on the equality of women and men; the Domestic Violence Act; reforms to improve the conditions of access to employment and training, working hours and social benefits for female workers, including domestic workers; and reforms of the Civil Code pertaining to family law. These reforms improve legal equality between husband and wife by establishing a regime of shared assets, introduce a joint family estate and provide for equal treatment of children, whether or not they are born in wedlock.

216. The Committee commends the Government for the political will it has displayed in implementing the Convention; in strengthening SERNAM by continuing its programmes as a decentralized government office in the country's 13 regions and granting it, in addition, budgetary autonomy; and in adopting the Equal Opportunity Plan for Women and implementing it nationally.

217. The Committee also commends the adoption of policies and the implementation of a number of government actions and programmes with a view to ensuring the equality of the girl child and of women in education, resulting in a national literacy rate of 94.6 per cent. The Committee commends policies aimed at improving the living conditions of temporary female workers and providing job training to youth of both sexes; the scholarship programme for women heads of household; and the high level of primary health-care coverage. The Committee welcomes the Government's decision to mainstream the gender perspective in all social programmes in order to integrate it in the definition and adoption of government policies and to incorporate the principle of equality in various spheres, thereby creating a solid basis for gender equity.

218. The Committee commends the efforts made by the Government of Chile both to disseminate information concerning women's human rights in the various social spheres and to uphold those rights. It also notes with satisfaction the actions taken with the participation of all governmental sectors and civil society aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence and which include the establishment of a special unit in the Department of Police and the creation of 17 specialized offices in the judiciary.

219. The Committee notes with satisfaction the follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the world conferences of the 1990s, including the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

220. The Committee notes that despite the important role Chilean women have played in the defence of human rights and in the restoration of democracy in their country, the persistence of stereotypes and traditional attitudes that were aggravated by the after-effects of 20 years of military dictatorship has slowed down the full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

221. The Committee is concerned at the failure to protect women under family law, which restricts, *inter alia*, women's ability to administer their own or joint property. The Committee is also concerned at the absence of any provision for dissolution of marriage. These are seriously discriminatory of women both in their family relations and in the full exercise of their economic and social rights.

222. The Committee recommends that the Government introduce and support vigorously legislation which permits divorce, allows women to remarry after divorce, and grants women and men the same rights to administer property during marriage and equal rights to property on divorce. It also recommends that women be granted the right to initiate divorce on the same terms as men.

223. The Committee is concerned at the persistent stereotypes of the role of women and men in society. It notes with concern that such prevailing social patterns, including adolescent girls dropping out of school because of early pregnancy, domestic tasks allotted to girls and women and the differential obligations assigned to women and men, reveal that deep-rooted social and cultural prejudices persist so as to negatively affect the achievement of equality for women. The Committee is concerned that changes in legislation, although positive, have been insufficient to bring about full de facto equality between women and men.

224. The Committee is concerned at the low level of participation by women in politics and governmental administration, especially at the decision-making level.

225. The Committee urges the Government to strengthen actions undertaken through comprehensive strategies, including temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention, intended to encourage greater participation of women in public life, particularly in political

decision-making, and to promote changes in attitudes and perceptions both of women and of men, with regard to their respective roles in the home, the family, the workplace and society as a whole. In particular, the Committee recommends that the Government take into account general recommendations 21 and 23 on equality in marriage, family relations and public life, and that it strengthen and intensify actions aimed at raising awareness of the importance of the multiple roles, activities and contributions of women in the community and family, and in general to promote equality of rights and opportunities between women and men.

226. The Committee expresses concern at the high rate of teenage pregnancy and the fact that a large percentage of those young women are single mothers and many of these girls are in early adolescence. The Committee notes that a substantial number of teenage pregnancies can be linked to acts of sexual violence against adolescent girls. It also notes that many girls are made pregnant by adolescent boys. The Committee further notes with concern that only pregnant girls are expelled from private schools at the secondary and preparatory levels.

227. The Committee recommends that the Government and SERNAM give priority to an examination of the situation of adolescents, and urges the Government to adopt various measures to address effectively the sexual and reproductive health services and information needs of adolescents, including through the dissemination of family planning and information on contraceptive methods, through, *inter alia*, the introduction of effective sex education programmes. It also urges the Government to make all efforts to ensure the passage of a law explicitly prohibiting that adolescent girls be expelled from private and public schools because of pregnancy.

228. The Committee is concerned at the inadequate recognition and protection of the reproductive rights of women in Chile. The Committee is especially concerned at the laws prohibiting and punishing any form of abortion. This law affects women's health, increases maternal mortality, and causes further suffering when women are imprisoned for violation of the law. The Committee is also concerned that women can only undergo sterilization in a public health institution. It is also concerned that a husband's consent is required for sterilization and a woman who wishes to be sterilized must already have four children. The Committee considers these provisions to violate the human rights of all women.

229. The Committee recommends that the Government consider review of the laws relating to abortion with a view to their amendment, in particular to provide safe abortion and to permit termination of pregnancy for therapeutic reasons or because of the health, including the mental health, of the woman. The Committee also urges the Government to revise laws which require health professionals to report women who undergo abortions to law enforcement agencies and which impose criminal penalties on these women. It also requests the Government to strengthen its actions and efforts aimed at the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, including by making all kinds of contraceptives more widely available and without any restriction. The Committee recommends granting women the right to undergo sterilization without requiring their husband's — or anyone else's — prior consent. In that connection, the Committee suggests that the Government take note of general recommendations 21 on marriage and family relations and 24 on article 12, "Women and health".

230. The Committee notes with concern that many women employed by small businesses and in the informal sector earn low wages, which makes it difficult for them to enter the current social insurance system. The Committee is also concerned that despite the efforts of SERNAM, women seasonal workers find themselves in a particularly precarious situation as regards working conditions, remuneration and childcare.

231. The Committee requests the Government to include in its next report data on the content and implementation of the new plan for equal opportunity 2000-2010, which is under preparation, as well as statistics on the status of women workers, improvements in their living conditions, childcare facilities and the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace.

232. The Committee requests the Government to include in its next report data on progress in the situation of rural and indigenous women, especially as regards their health, employment and educational status.

233. The Committee requests information on the incidence among women of all ages of tobacco use, and on abuse of alcohol and other substances in the next report.

234. The Committee recommends that the Government of Chile describe in its next periodic report the measures it adopts to meet the concerns expressed in these concluding comments.

235. The Committee recommends that these concluding comments be widely disseminated in Chile so that Chilean society as a whole, and the Government, administrators and politicians, in particular, are aware of the measures taken to guarantee *de jure* and de facto equality for women and the further measures necessary in that respect. The Committee also requests the Government to continue its wide dissemination of the Convention, the general

recommendations of the Committee and the Beijing Platform for Action, particularly among women's and human rights organizations.

4. Third and fourth periodic reports

Spain

236. The Committee considered the third and fourth periodic reports of Spain (CEDAW/C/ESP/3 and CEDAW/C/ESP/4) at its 436th and 437th meetings, on 17 June 1999.

(a) Introduction by the State party

237. In introducing the report, the representative of Spain pointed out that the benchmarks for Spain's national programmes on equality of opportunities had been derived from the platforms and plans of action which had been approved at the various global conferences, from earlier regional preparatory meetings and from the European Union. A number of legal reforms had been adopted to guarantee equality in the entire body of Spanish laws.

238. The representative informed the Committee of the various institutional mechanisms which had been established. The Constitution provided for competencies in the area of equality of opportunities to be distributed between the State, autonomous communities and town councils and, as a result, administrations for the promotion of equality existed in all autonomous communities and women's affairs units had been established in numerous town councils. At the national level, the Institute for Women's Issues, which was attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, was the agency charged with promoting government policies in the area of equality. The Minister of Labour and Social Affairs chaired the Institute's Governing Council, which was responsible for implementing policies to coordinate the work of the different ministerial departments concerned with women. The objective of the Directorate-General of the Institute was to ensure maximum coherence in the various equal opportunity policies elaborated by the national Government and the autonomous communities. Non-governmental organizations participated in the work of the Governing Council and received technical and financial assistance for the implementation of specific programmes.

239. The representative outlined the priorities of the different Plans of Action for Equal Opportunities. The main objective of the First Plan (1988-1990) was to enact legislation that would ensure consistency between the domestic legal order and the provisions of the Constitution with respect to the protection and guarantee of equality. The Second Plan (1993-1995) was focused primarily on education, vocational training and health. The Third Plan (1997-2000) had followed the lines of European policies in that area, with a view to promoting a common policy and ensuring gender mainstreaming in all programmes and policies.

240. The representative informed the Committee of the progress that had been made in the field of education, in which women had made significant strides. For example, in only seven years, the number of women who had submitted doctoral theses had risen by 202 per cent. Gender-based inequalities in vocational training and higher education had been reduced considerably, even though some gender-based differences remained in the choice of fields of study. A review of teaching materials and curricula had been begun in collaboration with the universities and a start had also been made on the mainstreaming of gender in training courses. The Ministry of Education and the Spanish Confederation of Associations of Parents of Students jointly promoted non-sexist teaching, sex education and shared family responsibilities. A commission had undertaken a critical review of the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy and had published various proposals for inclusion in a new edition of the dictionary.

241. The employment rate for women had gone up during the 1990s, following the adoption of a variety of measures. The Spanish Kingdom's Action Plan for Employment promoted, *inter alia*, entrepreneurship among women and their insertion into the workforce. The Institute for Women's Issues, in collaboration with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Spain, provided technical and financial assistance to a large number of women entrepreneurs. The draft legislation aimed at reconciling the family and working lives of women, which had been submitted to Parliament, contained provisions for maternity or paternity leave.

242. Despite the recent advances made, participation in decision-making, which was another area of key importance for the advancement of women, continued to be limited. The percentage of women parliamentarians had increased from 15 per cent in 1989-1993 to 22 per cent in the national Parliament and from 7 per cent to 20 per cent in the parliaments of the autonomous communities. The number of women employed in ministries, State secretariats and the public service had increased considerably, to 45 per cent. Studies and campaigns had been carried out to ensure more active participation by women in political and social life, but the structures and organizations of power, which were male dominated, continued to be an obstacle.

243. Her Government had adopted numerous measures to eliminate violence against women. In 1998, it had approved the 1998-2000 Plan of Action on violence against women, which had been prepared in collaboration with ministerial departments, autonomous communities, local municipal councils and non-governmental organizations. The Plan contained elements for a comprehensive response to the problem of violence against women, including awareness-raising and prevention, education and training, social resources, health, legislation and judicial practice, and investigation.

244. The representative highlighted the important role of the information media and informed the Committee of the work being done by the Advertising Monitoring Unit, which had made an important contribution to the elimination of discrimination in the portrayal of women in the media.

245. The situation of women in rural areas had changed considerably, since young rural women sought employment outside of agriculture and the home. Only 25 per cent of rural landowners were women, while the average size of their properties was only a third of that of male landowners.

246. Priority areas in the field of the advancement of women and health were the prevention of gynaecological cancer, care for pregnant women, menopause, information on and follow-up of contraceptive use, and the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, especially among adolescents.

247. She concluded by stressing that inequality had ceased to be a problem that affected only women and had become a social problem.

(b) Concluding comments by the Committee

Introduction

248. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Spain for submitting detailed third and fourth periodic reports, containing data disaggregated by sex. It commends the Government for the comprehensive written replies to the Committee's questions and its oral presentation, which provided additional information on the current situation of the implementation of the Convention. It appreciates the frank and open manner in which the State party shared with the Committee its analysis of the situation of women and the identification of areas for further progress.

249. The Committee commends the Government of Spain for having sent a large delegation, headed by the Director-General of the Institute for Women's Issues. The Committee notes that recent governmental action, and in particular the Third Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities, are placed within the context of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

250. The Committee commends the Government on its strong commitment to achieving equality and equal opportunities for women, reflected in the sustained progress it has achieved in implementing the Convention since the consideration of the second periodic report in 1992.

251. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Third Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities (1997-2000). It welcomes the introduction of gender mainstreaming as a strategy involving all State bodies, the autonomous communities and civil society, as well as the view that the achievement of gender equality is a societal concern, rather than a women's issue, and is the responsibility of the State and its authorities.

252. The Committee commends the work of the Institute for Women's Issues and commends the Government on the establishment of the Sectoral Women's Conference as a consultative and deliberative body to ensure consistency between the State's equality and equal opportunities policy and those of the autonomous communities.

253. The Committee notes with appreciation the use of affirmative action measures, especially in the field of employment, to overcome obstacles to women's de facto equality. It also commends the Government on the adoption, in April 1998, of a Plan of Action on violence against women with specific budgetary allocations for each of the areas covered by the Plan. It notes the high level of women's educational achievement, especially at the tertiary level. The Committee commends the Government for recognizing, and addressing by different means, stereotypical attitudes as a major source of women's continuing disadvantage.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

254. The Committee notes that there are no significant factors or difficulties which prevent the effective implementation of the Convention in Spain.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

255. The Committee notes that the Spanish Constitution allows for a high degree of decentralization and that competence in respect of equal opportunities has been transferred to the autonomous communities. While noting that such decentralization may facilitate greater involvement of citizens, in particular women, in decision-making

processes, the Committee expresses its concern that in the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms of the national Government, such decentralization may lead to an uneven enjoyment by women of the rights protected under the Convention in the State party.

256. The Committee recommends that the Government carefully monitor equality measures taken at the level of the autonomous communities and their coherence and accountability with national equality policies. It also urges the Government to ensure strong links between the central and local Governments and full support to the Women's Sectoral Conference so as to enable it to implement fully its role as a mechanism for collaboration between the central and regional governments.

257. The Committee expresses concern that notwithstanding the Government's active policy and concrete measures to eliminate them, stereotypical gender-based attitudes persist with regard to the roles of women and men in the home, in the workplace and in society. The Committee is particularly concerned that while women are gradually becoming integrated into the world of work, men are not becoming involved in parental and household tasks in a comparable rate and manner.

258. The Committee recommends that high priority be placed on efforts to eradicate traditional stereotypes that perpetuate direct and indirect discrimination against women. The Committee encourages the State party to strengthen educational measures, beginning at a very early age, and to increase its collaboration with civil society organizations, the media and the private sector so as to achieve greater balance in the roles and responsibilities of women and men, particularly in the sharing of family responsibilities. In promoting this policy, it is also necessary simultaneously to encourage greater participation of women in decision-making in public life.

259. The Committee notes that women's participation in the labour market is one of the priority areas in the Third Plan of Action, and that the Employment Plan for 1998 is also contributing to a change in the situation of women in the labour market. These measures notwithstanding, the Committee is concerned that women's overall participation in the labour market is one of the lowest among Western European countries, with only 32 per cent of women holding full-time employment, while the rate of women in part-time employment remains at 76 per cent. Women's unemployment rate is almost double that of men and, on average, women earn about 30 per cent less than men. While new legislation protecting part-time workers was introduced in 1998 to promote such employment, the Committee expresses concern that these measures may lead to short-term gains in women's employment, without addres long-term structural issues of women's double burde paid and unpaid work. These measures may also lead to perpetuation and reinforcement of stereotypical attit about women's family responsibilities, rather than increa their participation in the labour market.

260. The Committee urges the Government to mor carefully the impact of legislation governing part-time v and its potential for unintentionally trapping women in type of employment. The Committee also urges Government to assess continuously the adequacy o incentive programmes for women entrepreneurs an monitor the need for comprehensive programmes provi information, training, economic incentives and s development to ensure success for women in small medium-sized enterprises.

261. While welcoming women's high level of educati achievement, especially at the university level where wo are in the majority, the Committee expresses concern those achievements are not yet reflected in wom equivalent access to, and representation in, the la market. In particular, while men's and women's sha public-sector employment is balanced, men hold two th of all jobs in the private sector.

262. The Committee recommends that the Governn study the causes for women remaining under-represente employment commensurate with their educational level, examine, in particular, recruitment practices, training professional development opportunities offered in the pri sector with a view to assessing their potential for ind discrimination against women.

263. While welcoming the adoption of a Plan of Actio violence against women (1998-2000) covering six are activity and with specific resource allocation for each and the amendment to the Penal Code in 1999 concer offences against sexual freedom, as well as on traffick the Committee is concerned about the apparent increa domestic violence.

264. The Committee urges the Government to ensure rigorous attention is paid to domestic violence in implementation of the Plan of Action. The effectivenes the steps taken should be monitored on a regular basis, a comprehensive impact assessment undertaken at the of the period covered by the Plan. The Committee recommends that as experience is gained implementation of the Plan based on good practices Government continue to introduce appropriate measur eliminate domestic violence. It further urges that dom violence issues be included as a mandatory part of the b

training of law enforcement personnel, and that investigation and prosecution of domestic violence complaints be undertaken on a par with other criminal offences.

265. The Committee is concerned at the significant increase in abortions among adolescents aged 15 to 19 years old.

266. The Committee recommends that abortions among adolescents be addressed by a multiplicity of means, including age-appropriate sex education in primary and secondary schools.

267. Notwithstanding the existence of a good preventive policy on HIV/AIDS, the Committee is concerned at the increase in women's infection rate with HIV/AIDS. The Committee is also concerned at the high level of women's drug and tobacco consumption and other substance abuses.

268. The Committee recommends that awareness-raising campaigns be undertaken concerning the preventable health hazards stemming from tobacco consumption, and that the need be assessed for additional regulatory and education measures to prevent and reduce smoking by women, especially among adolescents and young women. The Committee also calls for further study of the causes for the increase in drug and alcohol use among women. The Committee invites the State party to provide in its next report detailed information on the provision of health services and health insurance to women, and in particular the potential and actual impact on women of any steps considered or taken towards privatization of the health sector.

269. While the Committee appreciates the Government's declared intention to apply the gender mainstreaming strategy in all policies and programmes, it notes the absence of any systematic attention to, or policy directed at the changes in the demographic composition of the State party. It notes a lack of attention to the situation of older women and the implications of demographic changes for women's health, poverty, pension entitlements and elder abuse. The Committee is particularly concerned that, according to the oral replies of the State party, women's domestic work and care for older persons are the two most important obstacles to women's equal participation in public life, and that 83 per cent of those caring for older persons are women.

270. The Committee recommends that the situation of older women be addressed in a comprehensive manner in the next Plan on Equal Opportunities as a matter of priority, and in a cross-cutting and cross-sectoral manner, with emphasis on older women's pension entitlements. It also recommends that the care requirements for older persons be addressed through public policy measures in order to establish societal responsibility for their well-being, rather than allowing it to remain predominantly as women's unpaid responsibility.

271. While the Committee notes the efforts deployed to reduce the illiteracy rate among women, it urges the Government to strengthen this policy in order to reduce women's illiteracy and thereby enable them to have access to information concerning their rights under the Convention.

272. The Committee is concerned at the lack of information on the number and type of women's studies courses at institutions of higher learning. It recommends that the Government provide this information in its next periodic report.

273. The Committee notes with appreciation that the issue of women in rural settings is one of the 10 areas of concern in the Third Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities. At the same time, the Committee is concerned about the lack of data with regard to rural women's poverty, employment rate, health situation, and educational achievement. It also notes a lack of data and information on the situation of other groups of particularly vulnerable women, such as disabled women.

274. The Committee is concerned at the situation of foreign women workers in domestic service, asylum seekers and women who may be living clandestinely in Spain. The Committee is concerned that these women may lack adequate protection from violence and abuse.

275. The Committee recommends that the situation of these women workers be assessed in greater depth, with particular emphasis on the types of work, legislative provisions governing their employment, and de facto situation. It also recommends that measures be taken to improve their level of literacy, including legal literacy.

276. The Committee requests that the Government respond in its next periodic report to the specific issues raised in these concluding comments.

277. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Spain of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of Spain, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular, to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

278. The Committee considered the third and fourth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CEDAW/C/UK/3 and Add.1 and 2; and CEDAW/C/UK/4 and Add.1-4) at its 429th and 430th meetings, on 10 June 1999.

(a) Introduction by the State party

279. In introducing the third and fourth periodic reports, the representative noted that since the submission of the third periodic report, and following the elections in 1997, substantial policy changes had occurred. The fourth periodic report represented the current situation in the State party. She also drew attention to the presence in the delegation of experts to address the situation of women in Scotland and Northern Ireland, where responsibility was devolved, and of representatives of different parts of the Government with responsibility for women's issues. Emphasis was placed on the clear vision for equality for women, represented by a new range of policies, and of new institutions and structures within Government.

280. The representative stressed the Government's commitment to equality of opportunity and fairness for all and to the elimination of discrimination against women. This encompassed the positive goal of improving women's overall position in society and included a commitment to giving men the chance to take on roles traditionally assumed by women. The obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the policy recommendations of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action were catalysts for helping the Government to deliver its goals. Through a process of gender mainstreaming, the major departments of State had policy and programme responsibility to promote the women's agenda as an integral part of their wider responsibilities. Other partners also played a critical role in achieving the goal of equality for women, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. Close cooperation was maintained with the Equal Opportunities Commission and with non-governmental organizations. The Equal Opportunities Commission and the Women's National Commission contributed to the preparation of the fourth periodic report.

281. In highlighting key policy developments relating to the Convention, the representative noted, in particular, the National Childcare Strategy, budgetary reforms such as an increased child benefit, working families tax credit, the introduction of the national minimum wage, pension reform, employment programmes (the New Deals), including those benefiting women, implementation of the Social Chapter of the European Union and family-friendly employment.

282. The representative stressed the commitment to "joined-up" and more open Government, which was reflected in the establishment of new machinery and processes. The appointment of two Ministers for Women, the creation of the Women's Unit in the Cabinet Office and new cross-cutting mechanisms such as a Cabinet Subcommittee on women and a women's policy group allowed for focused attention to women's issues. It was pointed out that the number of women in Parliament and in the Cabinet had reached the highest level ever. The representative identified a number of continuing challenges, including the implication of the decision to mainstream women's issues and the related relatively low profile of the women's machinery, as well as women's lack of information about government action on their behalf.

283. The process of devolution reflecting the diversity in the State party represented a major constitutional change. While the Government of the United Kingdom retained overall responsibility for implementation of the Convention, certain responsibilities were being devolved to the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Assembly for Wales, respectively. The representatives provided an overview of the legislative powers and institutional structures and of mechanisms responsible for women's issues and of planned as well as ongoing activities. It was noted that detailed post-devolution working arrangements would be decided by Ministers in due course.

284. Women in Northern Ireland had played a very active role in the peace process and 14 women had been elected to the new Northern Ireland Assembly, which had a total of 108 seats. Transferred responsibilities included responsibility for equality legislation, including sex discrimination and equal pay legislation, for women's issues generally, and for the administration of the new Equality Commission. The representative stressed the commitment to a continuing and effective process on women's issues in Northern Ireland.

285. A commitment to promoting equal opportunities underpinned the devolution settlement with regard to Scotland. The Equal Opportunities Committee of the Parliament had a wide remit, including power to initiate new legislation. A new Equality Unit in the Scottish Executive would play a key role in supporting mainstreaming of all policy and programme developments, implementation and evaluation in areas of gender, race, and disability. Women's representation in the Scottish Parliament (37 per cent) and in the Cabinet (3 out of 10) was noted, and consultative processes with women's organizations were highlighted.

286. With regard to Wales, the representative noted that the Welsh Assembly would have no new powers to create legislation, but will have transferred to it the powers currently held by the Secretary of State for Wales. A standing committee on equality was to be created, supported by an equality policy unit. Of those elected to the new Welsh Assembly, 28 were women (42 per cent), and four women had been appointed to the 8-person Cabinet.

287. In addition to the important developments in devolution, the representative highlighted the role of the Treasury and of the 1999 budget with regard to women. The new budget process had a more strategic orientation, which sought to address the causes of problems, rather than to remedy their effects. It also required a gender impact assessment, as well as mainstreaming. The overall emphasis of the 1999 budget was on poverty reduction, which had a series of implications for women and children, including a new tax rate that benefited low-earning women; a new low basic tax rate; reduction in National Insurance contributions for 8 million women; extension of maternity pay to low-paid women in part-time work; new maternity grants; a further real increase in child benefits; and additional support for lone parents.

288. In conclusion, the representative noted that the Government had put in place the main structural elements and that progress was being made in addressing the continuing institutional and cultural obstacles that women continued to face. She underlined the Government's determination to secure further improvement for women.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

289. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for submitting detailed third and fourth periodic reports containing data disaggregated by sex. It commends the Government for the comprehensive written replies to the Committee's questions and its oral presentation that further clarified recent developments in the State party. It appreciates the open manner in which the report was prepared and presented and, in particular, the breadth of the consultative process with non-governmental organizations during the preparation of the fourth periodic report. This enriched the reports and enabled a large number of women to become informed about the Convention and the rights protected by it.

290. The Committee commends the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for having sent a large delegation with a high degree of expertise, which was led by the Director of the Women's Unit, Cabinet Office, and included officials from various branches of Government and from the Scottish and Northern Ireland offices. Their participation enhanced the quality of the constructive dialogue between the State party and the Committee. The Committee notes that the reports refer to steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

291. The Committee commends the Government for withdrawing some reservations entered to the Convention upon ratification and on the fact that remaining reservations are kept under review. The Committee notes that this is in keeping with one of the Government's commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

292. The Committee notes the commitment to "joined-up" and open Government and especially the programme of consultation on public policy issues with women who are not members of representative organizations. It also commends the decision to mainstream women's issues into all areas of work of the Government, particularly into the work of the Treasury and the budget process. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Cabinet Subcommittee on Women and the creation of governmental machinery on women's issues and its role as catalyst and facilitator for mainstreaming.

293. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the regional human rights instruments and the enactment of the Human Rights Act 1998. This will create an environment in which women's human rights can be developed to comply fully with the Convention.

294. The Committee also welcomes legislative changes since the consideration of the second report in 1991, including the amended Sex Discrimination Act (1996), the Protection from Harassment Act (1997), the Sex Offenders Act (1997), and the National Minimum Wage Act (1999).

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

295. The Committee notes that there are no significant factors or difficulties which prevent the effective implementation of the Convention in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

296. The Committee notes the fundamental constitutional changes in the State party, including the devolution of a degree of power and responsibility for government to elected

bodies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Committee notes, however, that the obligation for implementing the Convention rests with the Government of the United Kingdom. The Committee notes that different regimes are being established in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with responsibility for women's equality issues, including legislative and administrative provisions and mechanisms. The Committee is concerned that the protection of women's human rights will be uneven.

297. The Committee urges the Government to ensure that there is a unified national strategy and policy for the implementation of all provisions of the Convention so that all women in the entire territory of the State party can benefit equally as a result of the Government's obligations under the Convention and its stated commitment to the goal of *de jure* and de facto equality for women. The Committee urges the Government to extend the legislative provisions for mainstreaming equality for women in Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom. The Committee also calls on the Government to monitor the implementation of the Convention carefully and, in particular, the practical arrangements that are being put in place on equality issues.

298. The Committee recognizes that only a short period of time has elapsed since the introduction of new legislation and policies in areas such as the national minimum wage, the New Deals (employment programmes) for women, the new outcome-oriented budgeting process and budgetary reforms, the commitment to family-friendly employment, and since the decision was made to mainstream women's issues into all areas of Government.

299. The Committee urges the Government to ensure rigorous analysis and evaluation of recently introduced and planned policies and their implications for *de jure* and de facto equality for women. It also invites the Government to continue to refine its mainstreaming approach and the cross-sectoral and cross-cutting approach to issues. The Committee requests the Government in its fifth periodic report to provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of these efforts so that the Committee can evaluate changes in relation to the Convention. In particular, the Committee requests the Government to monitor the implementation of policies in the entire territory of the State party.

300. While welcoming the adoption of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Committee emphasizes that the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms does not provide for the full range of women's human rights incorporated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In particular, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms does not expressly provide for the rights to equality in article 2 of the Convention. Nor does it contain a positive obligation for Governments to eliminate indirect discrimination as defined in article 1 of the Convention or provide for temporary special measures as set out in article 4.1 of the Convention. The Committee is concerned that the Government, as stated in the oral replies, considers the obligations under the Convention to be of a much more "programmatic" nature than the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and thus difficult to introduce into common law. The Committee considers that nonetheless full implementation of the Convention can be achieved.

301. The Committee recommends that the Government give further consideration to the introduction of legislation covering all aspects of the Convention, in particular the provisions of article 1 to prohibit indirect discrimination and to provide women with effective remedies against indirect discrimination. The Committee also urges the Government to introduce legislative protection for the rights in article 2, and to take further measures to implement article 4.1, including legislative measures, and to set goals for women's equal representation in all areas and at all levels. It also recommends that the Government give consideration to incorporating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into domestic law, as it has incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

302. The Committee notes with concern that the numbers and percentage of women in public and political life, in the judiciary, in positions of higher education and in other areas remain far from equal with men. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake a critical evaluation of the impact and sufficiency of current measures to comply fully with its obligations under articles 7 and 8 of the Convention. The Committee recommends that specific strategies be adopted to encourage women to seek public office and governmental appointments, including mentoring, networking and review of merit qualifications to reflect a broader range of experiences and skills.

303. The Committee is concerned at the lack of information provided by the State party with regard to the implementation of the Convention, as well as at the limited follow-up to commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in the overseas territories, most notably the Isle of Man, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Virgin Islands and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

304. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to implement the Convention in its overseas territories, and to provide comprehensive

information on steps and measures taken in this regard in its next report.

305. The Committee expresses concern at the disadvantaged situation of women belonging to ethnic minorities, notwithstanding the existence of legislative protection against discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity. Ethnic minority women continue to experience higher levels of unemployment, lower levels of education and training, lower wages and salaries and fewer benefits than white women.

306. The Committee recommends that steps be taken to ensure the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination against ethnic minority women, including through positive action in recruitment, awareness campaigns and targeted training, education, employment and health-care strategies.

307. The Committee is concerned at the continuing pay gap between women and men where figures for 1998 show that average hourly earnings of full-time women employees amounted to around 80 per cent of men's earnings and women's average gross weekly earnings were around 72 per cent of men's earnings. The Committee is particularly concerned that women working in higher education including academic staff consistently receive lower pay than their male counterparts and do not advance in their careers as rapidly or in the same numbers as men.

308. The Committee recommends that the Government use its new employment policies to address the pay gap between women's and men's earnings. It urges the Government to review the Equal Pay Act, taking into account developments that have refined the concepts of equal pay for equal work and for work of comparable value. It urges the Government to implement any recommendations that might be contained in the report on higher education pay with a view to eliminating discrimination. It also recommends that the Government assess the impact of cultural stereotypes and women's reproductive responsibilities on the continuing pay gap. In this regard, it invites the Government to pursue its efforts towards providing men more opportunities to take on roles traditionally assumed by women, to continue to review and rationalize maternal and parental leave and benefits, and to share its findings and insights with the Committee in its next report.

309. Noting the Government's efforts and will to address the issue, the Committee is nonetheless seriously concerned at the level of teenage conception in the State party, which is the highest rate among the countries of Western Europe, and at the consequences of early motherhood, such as lower educational achievement, higher levels of poverty and greater reliance on social welfare. The Committee is also concerned at the high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, especially among teenagers aged 16 to 19. The Committee notes with concern that the Abortion Act 1967 does not extend to Northern Ireland where, with limited exceptions, abortion continues to be illegal.

310. The Committee recommends that teenage conception and pregnancy be addressed by a multiplicity of measures, including a greater focus on male responsibility and a review of the primary school curriculum with a view to introducing age-appropriate sex education. It also recommends the allocation of resources for prevention and treatment programmes for sexually transmitted diseases directed at adolescents within a holistic approach to sexual and reproductive health, including sexual violence. The Committee also recommends that the Government initiate a process of public consultation in Northern Ireland on reform of the abortion law.

311. While noting the legislation and measures in place to address violence against women, the Committee is concerned at the absence of a national strategy on the prevention and elimination of violence against women. According to information available to the Committee, women in Northern Ireland are particularly affected by violence. The Committee recommends that a unified and multifaceted national strategy to eliminate violence against women be implemented to include legal, educational, financial and social components, in particular support for victims.

312. The Committee is concerned at several aspects of the criminal justice system in relation to women. It notes the high number of women in prison, particularly those from ethnic minorities. Many women have been imprisoned for drug-related offences or because of the criminalization of minor infringements, which in some instances seem indicative of women's poverty. It also notes that in the United Kingdom, and particularly in Northern Ireland, young female offenders are held in adult prisons, there are inadequate educational and rehabilitative programmes for women prisoners and they are often held in prisons situated far from their families. It also notes that the defence of provocation is not widely available to women victims of violence who are charged with murder and that there is a low level of convictions for rape and sexual violence.

313. The Committee recommends that the Government intensify its efforts to understand the causes for the apparent increase in women's criminality and to seek alternative sentencing and custodial strategies for minor infringements. It also calls on the Government to improve the education of judges with regard to domestic violence so that these cases are given the same attention and consideration as cases brought under other provisions of the criminal law.

314. The Committee notes that demographic change in the State party requires urgent action with regard to the situation of older women, and of related implications for women's health, poverty and especially pension entitlements, elder abuse, and accommodation.

315. The Committee recommends that the situation of older women be addressed in a cross-cutting and cross-sectoral manner, with a view to ensuring adequate provision for their physical, mental, economic and social well-being.

316. The Committee requests that the Government include in its next report a comprehensive discussion of measures, including legislation and policies, taken to alleviate women's poverty and the results of these measures both in terms of remedying existing poverty and preventing women from falling into poverty and breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty. The Government is also requested to provide detailed information on progress in devolution and its impact on women's enjoyment of their rights covered under the Convention.

317. The Committee requests that the Government responds in its next periodic report to the specific issues raised in these concluding comments.

318. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, including its overseas territories, of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of the United Kingdom, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular, to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Chapter V

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

319. The Committee considered ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (agenda item 6) at its 426th and 444th meetings, on 8 and 25 June 1999.

320. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who introduced the report of the Secretariat (CEDAW/C/1999/II/4) and drew attention to a working paper on draft rules of procedure (CEDAW/C/1997/WG/WP.1) and proposals thereon.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6

1. Rules of procedure

321. The Committee decided to continue consideration of its rules of procedure at its twenty-second session. It requested the Secretariat to integrate the discussion at the twenty-first session and the proposals presented by Silvia Cartwright into a working paper to be presented at its twenty-second session.

322. The Committee decided that members should submit written comments on the rules of procedure and Ms. Cartwrights's proposals thereon to the Division for the Advancement of Women by 31 July 1999. These comments would be sent to Ms. Cartwright and integrated into the working paper.

2. Draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

323. In the light of a briefing by Silvia Cartwright, the resource person appointed by the Committee to attend meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Committee requested the Secretariat to provide information at its twenty-second session on procedures employed with regard to existing treaty-based communications and inquiry mechanisms.

324. The Committee also requested the Secretariat to provide a substantive comparative analysis of the draft optional protocol to the Convention adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session with existing United Nations treaty-based communications and inquiry mechanisms.

3. Future meetings

325. The Committee requested the Division for the Advancement of Women to look into the modalities required for the Committee to meet, on a biennial basis, from the year 2001, at the United Nations Office at Geneva and inform the Committee of its findings at the next session.

4. Members of the pre-session working group for the twenty-third session

326. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the twenty-third session and their alternates should be:

Members

Charlotte Abaka (Africa)
Savitri Goonesekere (Asia)
Rosalyn Hazelle (Latin America and the Caribbean)
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Europe)

Alternates

Yung-Chung Kim (Asia)
Zelmira Regazzoli (Latin America and the Caribbean)
Anne Lise Ryel (Europe)
Kongit Sinegiorgis (Africa)

5. Reports to be considered at future sessions

327. The Committee decided that it would consider the following reports at its twenty-second and twenty-third sessions:

Twenty-second session

Initial reports

India
Jordan
Myanmar

Initial, second and third periodic reports

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Second and third periodic reports

Burkina Faso
Luxembourg

Third periodic reports

Belarus

Combined second and third periodic reports and fourth periodic reports

Germany

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the initial reports of Lithuania and Maldives.

Twenty-third session

Initial reports

Lithuania
Maldives
Republic of Moldova

Third periodic reports

Iraq
Netherlands

Third and fourth periodic reports

Austria

Fourth periodic reports

Cuba
Romania

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the combined second, third and fourth periodic reports of Jamaica, and the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Mongolia.

6. Dates of the twenty-second session of the Committee

328. Consistent with the calendar of conferences for 2000, the twenty-second session should be held from 17 January to 4 February 2000. The pre-session working group for the twenty-third session will meet from 7 to 11 February 2000.

Chapter VI

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

329. The Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 5) at its 426th and 444th meetings, on 8 and 25 June 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.426 and 444).

330. The item was presented by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit, who introduced a note by the Secretary-General on reports of the specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1999/II/3 and Add.1-4).

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 5

1. Special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century"

331. The Committee requested the Division for the Advancement of Women to explore the possibility of all experts attending the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century". It suggested if that is not possible, at least one representative of each regional group, in addition to the Chairperson, should attend the special session.

2. Special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

332. The Committee adopted the following statement, which it forwarded together with its general recommendation 24 on article 12 of the Convention, "Women and health", to the above-mentioned special session of the General Assembly:

> In 1994, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women contributed to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). In its suggestion 8, which it adopted in 1995, the Committee decided to employ the reporting mechanism under the Convention so as to follow the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD.
>
> Since that time, the Committee has consistently addressed the issue of women's health, including their right to reproductive health, within the framework of the reporting process, particularly within the context of articles 10 (h), 12 and 16 (e) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. These provisions address, among other things, the right of access to family health and family planning education, the right to quality health-care services, the right to receive appropriate pregnancy and childbirth services, and the right to equality in deciding freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children.
>
> The Committee has cooperated actively with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and participated in the round table of human rights treaty bodies on human rights approaches to women's health, with a focus on reproductive and sexual health rights, organized by UNFPA, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, held in December 1996.
>
> At its twentieth session, in January 1999, the Committee adopted general recommendation 24 on article 12 of the Convention, "Women and health". This general recommendation outlines the Committee's understanding of the obligations of States parties in relation to equality in the enjoyment of women's rights to health.
>
> The Committee forwards this general recommendation to the special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Chapter VII

Provisional agenda for the twenty-second session

333. The Committee considered the provisional agenda for its twenty-second session at its 444th meeting, on 25 June 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.444). The Committee decided to approve the following provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda of the twenty-third session.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-second session.

Chapter VIII

Adoption of the report

334. At its 444th meeting, on 25 June 1999, the Committee adopted the report on its twenty-first session (CEDAW/C/1999/II/L.1 and CEDAW/C/1999/II/CRP.2 and Add.1-7), as orally amended.

nnex I

States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as at 1 August 1999

ates parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
lbania	11 May 1994[a]	10 June 1994
lgeria	22 May 1996[a] [b]	21 June 1996
ndorra	15 January 1997[a]	14 February 1997
ngola	17 September 1986[a]	17 October 1986
ntigua and Barbuda	1 August 1989[a]	31 August 1989
rgentina	15 July 1985[b]	14 August 1985
rmenia	13 September 1993[a]	13 October 1993
ustralia	28 July 1983[b]	27 August 1983
ustria	31 March 1982[b]	30 April 1982
zerbaijan	10 July 1995[a]	9 August 1995
ahamas	6 October 1993[a]	5 November 1993
angladesh	6 November 1984[a] [b]	6 December 1984
arbados	16 October 1980	3 September 1981
elarus	4 February 1981[c]	3 September 1981
elgium	10 July 1985[b]	9 August 1985
elize	16 May 1990	15 June 1990
enin	12 March 1992	11 April 1992
hutan	31 August 1981	30 September 1981
olivia	8 June 1990	8 July 1990
osnia and Herzegovina	1 September 1993[d]	1 October 1993
otswana	13 August 1996[a]	12 September 1996
razil	1 February 1984[b]	2 March 1984
ulgaria	8 February 1982[c]	10 March 1982
urkina Faso	14 October 1987[a]	13 November 1987
urundi	8 January 1992	7 February 1992
ambodia	15 October 1992[a]	14 November 1992
ameroon	23 August 1994[a]	22 September 1994
anada	10 December 1981[c]	9 January 1982
ape Verde	5 December 1980[a]	3 September 1981
entral African Republic	21 June 1991[a]	21 July 1991
had	9 June 1995[a]	9 July 1995
hile	7 December 1989	6 January 1990
hina	4 November 1980[b]	3 September 1981
olombia	19 January 1982	18 February 1982
omoros	31 October 1994[a]	30 November 1994
ongo	26 July 1982	25 August 1982
osta Rica	4 April 1986	4 May 1986
ôte d'Ivoire	19 December 1995[a]	17 January 1996
roatia	9 September 1992[d]	9 October 1992
uba	17 July 1980[b]	3 September 1981
yprus	23 July 1985[a] [b]	22 August 1985
zech Republic[e]	22 February 1993[c] [d]	24 March 1993

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Democratic Republic of the Congo[f]	17 October 1986	16 November 1986
Denmark	21 April 1983	21 May 1983
Djibouti	2 December 1998[a]	1 January 1999
Dominica	15 September 1980	3 September 1981
Dominican Republic	2 September 1982	2 October 1982
Ecuador	9 November 1981	9 December 1981
Egypt	18 September 1981[b]	18 October 1981
El Salvador	19 August 1981[b]	18 September 1981
Equatorial Guinea	23 October 1984[a]	22 November 1984
Eritrea	5 September 1995[a]	5 October 1995
Estonia	21 October 1991[a]	20 November 1991
Ethiopia	10 September 1981[b]	10 October 1981
Fiji	28 August 1995[a b]	27 September 1995
Finland	4 September 1986	4 October 1986
France	14 December 1983[b c]	13 January 1984
Gabon	21 January 1983	20 February 1983
Gambia	16 April 1993	16 May 1993
Georgia	26 October 1994[a]	25 November 1994
Germany[g]	10 July 1985[b]	9 August 1985
Ghana	2 January 1986	1 February 1986
Greece	7 June 1983	7 July 1983
Grenada	30 August 1990	29 September 1990
Guatemala	12 August 1982	11 September 1982
Guinea	9 August 1982	8 September 1982
Guinea-Bissau	23 August 1985	22 September 1985
Guyana	17 July 1980	3 September 1981
Haiti	20 July 1981	3 September 1981
Honduras	3 March 1983	2 April 1983
Hungary	22 December 1980[c]	3 September 1981
Iceland	18 June 1985	18 July 1985
India	9 July 1993[b]	8 August 1993
Indonesia	13 September 1984[b]	13 October 1984
Iraq	13 August 1986[a b]	12 September 1986
Ireland	23 December 1985[a b c]	22 January 1986
Israel	3 October 1991[b]	2 November 1991
Italy	10 June 1985[b]	10 July 1985
Jamaica	19 October 1984[b]	18 November 1984
Japan	25 June 1985	25 July 1985
Jordan	1 July 1992[b]	31 July 1992
Kazakhstan	26 August 1998[a]	25 September 1998
Kenya	9 March 1984[a]	8 April 1984
Kuwait	2 September 1994[a]	2 October 1994
Kyrgyzstan	10 February 1997[a]	12 March 1997
Lao People's Democratic Republic	14 August 1981	13 September 1981
Latvia	14 April 1992[a]	14 May 1992
Lebanon	21 April 1997[a b]	21 May 1997

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Lesotho	22 August 1995[a] [b]	21 September 1995
Liberia	17 July 1984[a]	16 August 1984
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	16 May 1989[a] [b]	15 June 1989
Liechtenstein	22 December 1995[a] [c]	21 January 1996
Lithuania	18 January 1994[a]	17 February 1994
Luxembourg	2 February 1989[b]	4 March 1989
Madagascar	17 March 1989	16 April 1989
Malawi	12 March 1987[a] [c]	11 April 1987
Malaysia	5 July 1995[a] [b]	4 August 1995
Maldives	1 July 1993[a] [b]	31 July 1993
Mali	10 September 1985	10 October 1985
Malta	8 March 1991[a] [b]	7 April 1991
Mauritius	9 July 1984[a] [c]	8 August 1984
Mexico	23 March 1981[b]	3 September 1981
Mongolia	20 July 1981[c]	3 September 1981
Morocco	21 June 1993[a] [b]	21 July 1993
Mozambique	16 April 1997[a]	16 May 1997
Myanmar	22 July 1997[a] [b]	21 August 1997
Namibia	23 November 1992[a]	23 December 1992
Nepal	22 April 1991	22 May 1991
Netherlands	23 July 1991[b]	22 August 1991
New Zealand	10 January 1985[b] [c]	9 February 1985
Nicaragua	27 October 1981	26 November 1981
Nigeria	13 June 1985	13 July 1985
Norway	21 May 1981	3 September 1981
Pakistan	12 March 1996[a] [b]	11 April 1996
Panama	29 October 1981	28 November 1981
Papua New Guinea	12 January 1995[a]	11 February 1995
Paraguay	6 April 1987[a]	6 May 1987
Peru	13 September 1982	13 October 1982
Philippines	5 August 1981	4 September 1981
Poland	30 July 1980[c]	3 September 1981
Portugal	30 July 1980	3 September 1981
Republic of Korea	27 December 1984[b] [c]	26 January 1985
Republic of Moldova	1 July 1994[a]	31 July 1994
Romania	7 January 1982[b]	6 February 1982
Russian Federation	23 January 1981[c]	3 September 1981
Rwanda	2 March 1981	3 September 1981
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 April 1985[a]	25 May 1985
Saint Lucia	8 October 1982[a]	7 November 1982
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4 August 1981[a]	3 September 1981
Samoa	25 September 1992[a]	25 October 1992
Senegal	5 February 1985	7 March 1985
Seychelles	5 May 1992[a]	4 June 1992
Sierra Leone	11 November 1988	11 December 1988

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Singapore	5 October 1995[a] [b]	4 November 1995
Slovakia[e]	28 May 1993[c] [d]	27 June 1993
Slovenia	6 July 1992[d]	5 August 1992
South Africa	15 December 1995[a]	14 January 1996
Spain	5 January 1984[b]	4 February 1984
Sri Lanka	5 October 1981	4 November 1981
Suriname	1 March 1993[a]	31 March 1993
Sweden	2 July 1980	3 September 1981
Switzerland	27 March 1997[a]	26 April 1997
Tajikistan	26 October 1993[a]	25 November 1993
Thailand	9 August 1985[a] [b] [c]	8 September 1985
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18 January 1994[d]	17 February 1994
Togo	26 September 1983[a]	26 October 1983
Trinidad and Tobago	12 January 1990[b]	11 February 1990
Tunisia	20 September 1985[b]	20 October 1985
Turkey	20 December 1985[a] [b]	19 January 1986
Turkmenistan	1 May 1997[a]	31 May 1997
Uganda	22 July 1985	21 August 1985
Ukraine	12 March 1981[c]	3 September 1981
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 April 1986[b]	7 May 1986
United Republic of Tanzania	20 August 1985	19 September 1985
Uruguay	9 October 1981	8 November 1981
Uzbekistan	19 July 1995[a]	18 August 1995
Vanuatu	8 September 1995[a]	8 October 1995
Venezuela	2 May 1983[b]	1 June 1983
Viet Nam	17 February 1982[b]	19 March 1982
Yemen [h]	30 May 1984[a] [b]	29 June 1984
Yugoslavia	26 February 1982	28 March 1982
Zambia	21 June 1985	21 July 1985
Zimbabwe	13 May 1991[a]	12 June 1991

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[a] Accession.

[b] Declarations and reservations.

[c] Reservation subsequently withdrawn.

[d] Succession.

[e] Before becoming separate States on 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia formed part of Czechoslovakia, which State had ratified the Convention on 16 February 1982.

[f] Effective 17 May 1997, Zaire was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[g] With effect from 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic (which ratified the Convention on 9 July 1980) and the Federal Republic of Germany (which ratified the Convention on 10 July 1985) united to form one sovereign State, which acts in the United Nations under the designation "Germany".

[h] On 22 May 1990, Democratic Yemen and Yemen merged to form a single State, which acts in the United Nations under the designation "Yemen".

Annex II

States parties which have deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

States parties	*Acceptance date*
Australia	4 June 1998
Brazil	5 March 1997
Canada	3 November 1997
Chile	8 May 1998
Denmark	12 March 1996
Finland	18 March 1996
France	8 August 1997
Guatemala	3 June 1999
Italy	31 May 1996
Liechtenstein	15 April 1997
Madagascar	19 July 1996
Malta	5 March 1997
Mexico	16 September 1996
Mongolia	19 December 1997
Netherlands	10 December 1997[a]
New Zealand	26 September 1996
Norway	29 March 1996
Republic of Korea	12 August 1996
Panama	5 November 1996
Sweden	17 July 1996
Switzerland	2 December 1997
United Kingdom	19 November 1997[b]

[a] For the Kingdom in Europe, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

[b] For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the British Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Annex III

Documents before the Committee at its twentieth and twenty-first sessions

A. Twentieth session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/1999/I/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/1999/I/2	Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
CEDAW/C/1999/I/3	Note by the Secretary-General on reports provided by specialized agencies of the United Nations on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities
CEDAW/C/1999/I/3/Add.1	Addendum: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
CEDAW/C/1999/I/3/Add.2	Addendum: World Health Organization
CEDAW/C/1999/I/3/Add.3	Addendum: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEDAW/C/1999/I/3/Add.4	Addendum: International Labour Organization
CEDAW/C/1999/I/4	Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1999/I/5	Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action based on its review of States parties' reports
CEDAW/C/1999/I/CRP.1 and Add.1-4	Report of the pre-session working group
CEDAW/C/1999/I/L.1 and Add.1-8	Draft report
CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1	Working paper containing the draft rules of procedure
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/DZA/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1	Initial report of Algeria
CEDAW/C/KGZ/1	Initial report of Kyrgyzstan
CEDAW/C/LIE/1	Initial report of Liechtenstein
CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Greece
CEDAW/C/THA/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Thailand
CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2	Combined third and fourth periodic reports of China
CEDAW/C/COL/4 and Add.1	Fourth periodic report of Colombia

B. Twenty-first session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/1999/II/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/1999/II/2	Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
CEDAW/C/1999/II/3	Note by the Secretary-General on reports provided by specialized agencies of the United Nations on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities
CEDAW/C/1999/II/3/Add.1	Addendum: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
CEDAW/C/1999/II/3/Add.2	Addendum: World Health Organization
CEDAW/C/1999/II/3/Add.3	Addendum: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEDAW/C/1999/II/4	Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1999/II/CRP.1 and Add.1-4	Report of the pre-session working group
CEDAW/C/1999/II/L.1 and CEDAW/C/1999/II/CRP.2 and Add.1-7	Draft report
CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1	Working paper containing the draft rules of procedure
CEDAW/C/1999/II/WG.I/WP.2	Proposals on the draft rules of procedure
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/GEO/1, and Add.1 and Corr.1	Initial report of Georgia
CEDAW/C/NPL/1	Initial report of Nepal
CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2	Combined initial and second reports of Belize
CEDAW/C/CHI/2 and CEDAW/C/CHI/3	Second and third periodic reports of Chile
CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Ireland
CEDAW/C/UK/3 and Add.1 and 2 and CEDAW/C/UK/4/Add.1-4	Third and fourth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
CEDAW/C/ESP/3 and CEDAW/C/ESP/4	Third and fourth periodic reports of Spain

Annex IV

Membership of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Name of member	*Country of nationality*
Charlotte Abaka**	**Ghana**
Ayse Feride Acar*	**Turkey**
Emna Aouij**	**Tunisia**
Carlota Bustelo García del Real*	**Spain**
Silvia Rose Cartwright*	**New Zealand**
Ivanka Corti**	**Italy**
Feng Cui**	**China**
Naela Gabr**	**Egypt**
Yolanda Ferrer Gómez*	**Cuba**
Aída González Martínez*	**Mexico**
Savitri Goonesekere**	**Sri Lanka**
Rosalyn Hazelle**	**Saint Kitts and Nevis**
Salma Khan*	**Bangladesh**
Yung-Chung Kim*	**Republic of Korea**
Rosario Manalo**	**Philippines**
Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini**	**South Africa**
Ahoua Ouedraogo*	**Burkina Faso**
Zelmira Regazzoli**	**Argentina**
Anne Lise Ryel*	**Norway**
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling*	**Germany**
Carmel Shalev**	**Israel**
Kongit Sinegiorgis*	**Ethiopia**
Chikako Taya**	**Japan**

* Term of office expires in 2000.

** Term of office expires in 2002.

Annex V

Status of submission and consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as at 1 August 1999

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
A. Initial reports			
Albania	10 June 1995		
Algeria	21 June 1997	1 September 1998 CEDAW/C/DZA/1 1 December 1998 CEDAW/C/DZA/1/Add.1	Twentieth (1999)
Andorra	14 February 1998		
Angola	17 October 1987		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1990	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1986	6 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.39)	Seventh (1988)
Armenia	13 October 1994	30 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1) 10 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1/Corr.1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1984	3 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.40)	Seventh (1988)
Austria	30 April 1983	20 October 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.17)	Fourth (1985)
Azerbaijan	9 August 1996	11 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/AZE/1)	Eighteenth (1998)
Bahamas	5 November 1994		
Bangladesh	6 December 1985	12 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.34)	Sixth (1987)
Barbados	3 September 1982	11 April 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.64)	Eleventh (1992)
Belarus	3 September 1982	4 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.5)	Second (1983)
Belgium	9 August 1986	20 July 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.53)	Eighth (1989)
Belize	15 June 1991	19 June 1996 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2)	
Benin	11 April 1993		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Bhutan	**30 September 1982**		
Bolivia	**8 July 1991**	**8 July 1991 (CEDAW/C/BOL/1) 26 August 1993 (CEDAW/C/BOL/1/Add.1)**	**Fourteenth (1995)**
Bosnia and Herzegovina	**1 October 1994**		
Botswana	**12 September 1997**		
Brazil	**2 March 1985**		
Bulgaria	**10 March 1983**	**13 June 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.15)**	**Fourth (1985)**
Burkina Faso	**13 November 1988**	**24 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.67)**	**Tenth (1991)**
Burundi	**7 February 1993**		
Cambodia	**14 November 1993**		
Cameroon	**22 September 1995**	**9 May 1999 (CEDAW/C/CMR/1**	
Canada	**9 January 1983**	**15 July 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.16)**	**Fourth (1985)**
Cape Verde	**3 September 1982**		
Central African Republic	**21 July 1992**		
Chad	**9 July 1996**		
Chile	**6 January 1991**	**3 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/CHI/1)**	**Fourteenth (1995)**
China	**3 September 1982**	**25 May 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.14)**	**Third (1984)**
Colombia	**18 February 1983**	**16 January 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.32)**	**Sixth (1987)**
Comoros	**30 November 1995**		
Congo	**25 August 1983**		
Costa Rica	**4 May 1987**		
Côte d'Ivoire	**17 January 1997**		
Croatia	**9 October 1993**	**10 January 1995 (CEDAW/C/CRO/1)**	**Eighteenth (1998)**
Cuba	**3 September 1982**	**27 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.4)**	**Second (1983)**
Cyprus	**22 August 1986**	**2 February 1994 (CEDAW/C/CYP/1-2)**	**Fifteenth (1996)**
Czech Republic	**24 March 1994**	**30 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/CZE/1)**	**Eighteenth (1998)**

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Democratic Republic of the Congo[b]	16 November 1987	1 March 1994 (CEDAW/C/ZAR/1)	
Denmark	21 May 1984	30 July 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.22)	Fifth (1986)
Dominica	3 September 1982		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1983	2 May 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.37)	Seventh (1988)
Ecuador	9 December 1982	14 August 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.23)	Fifth (1986)
Egypt	18 October 1982	2 February 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.10)	Third (1984)
El Salvador	18 September 1982	3 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.19)	Fifth (1986)
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1985	16 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.50)	Eighth (1989)
Eritrea	5 October 1996		
Estonia	20 November 1992		
Ethiopia	10 October 1982	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Fiji	27 September 1996		
Finland	4 October 1987	16 February 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.56)	Eighth (1989)
France	13 January 1985	13 February 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.33)	Sixth (1987)
Gabon	20 February 1984	19 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.54)	Eighth (1989)
Gambia	16 May 1994		
Georgia	25 November 1995	9 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/GEO/1)	Twenty-first (1999)
Germany	9 August 1986	15 September 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.59)	Ninth (1990)
Ghana	1 February 1987	29 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/GHA/1-2)	Eleventh (1992)
Greece	7 July 1984	5 April 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.28)	Sixth (1987)
Grenada	29 September 1991		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Guatemala	**11 September 1983**	**2 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2 and Corr.1) 7 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2/ Amend.1)**	**Thirteenth (1994) Thirteenth (1994)**
Guinea	**8 September 1983**		
Guinea-Bissau	**22 September 1986**		
Guyana	**3 September 1982**	**23 January 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.63)**	**Thirteenth (1994)**
Haiti	**3 September 1982**		
Honduras	**2 April 1984**	**3 December 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.44)**	**Eleventh (1992)**
Hungary	**3 September 1982**	**20 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.3)**	**Third (1984)**
Iceland	**18 July 1986**	**5 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)**	**Fifteenth (1996)**
India	**8 August 1994**	**2 February 1999 (CEDAW/C/IND/1)**	
Indonesia	**13 October 1985**	**17 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.36)**	**Seventh (1988)**
Iraq	**12 September 1987**	**16 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.66/Rev.1)**	**Twelfth (1993)**
Ireland	**22 January 1987**	**18 February 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.47)**	**Eighth (1989)**
Israel	**2 November 1992**	**12 January 1994[c] 7 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2)**	**Seventeenth (1997)**
Italy	**10 July 1986**	**20 October 1989 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.62)**	**Tenth (1991)**
Jamaica	**18 November 1985**	**12 September 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.38)**	**Seventh (1988)**
Japan	**25 July 1986**	**13 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.48)**	**Seventh (1988)**
Jordan	**31 July 1993**	**27 October 1997 (CEDAW/C/JOR/1)**	
Kenya	**8 April 1985**	**4 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/KEN/1-2)**	**Twelfth (1993)**
Kuwait	**1 October 1995**		
Kyrgyzstan	**12 March 1998**	**26 August 1998 (CEDAW/C/KGZ/1**	**Twentieth (1999)**
Lao People's Democratic Republic	**13 September 1982**		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Latvia	14 May 1993		
Lebanon	21 May 1998		
Lesotho	21 September 1996		
Liberia	16 August 1985		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1990	18 February 1991 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1) 4 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1/Add.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Liechtenstein	21 January 1997	4 August 1997 (CEDAW/C/LIE/1)	Twentieth (1999)
Lithuania	17 February 1995	4 June 1998 (CEDAW/C/LTU/1)	
Luxembourg	4 March 1990	13 November 1996 (CEDAW/C/LUX/1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Madagascar	16 April 1990	21 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.65) 8 November 1993 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.65/Rev.2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Malawi	11 April 1988	15 July 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.58)	Ninth (1990)
Malaysia	4 August 1996		
Maldives	1 July 1994	28 January 1999 CEDAW/C/MDV/1	
Mali	10 October 1986	13 November 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.43)	Seventh (1988)
Malta	7 April 1992		
Mauritius	8 August 1985	23 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/MAR/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Mexico	3 September 1982	14 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.2)	Second (1983)
Mongolia	3 September 1982	18 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.20)	Fifth (1986)
Morocco	21 July 1994	14 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/MOR/1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Mozambique	16 May 1998		
Myanmar	21 August 1998	14 March 1999 CEDAW/C/MNR/1	
Namibia	23 December 1993	4 November 1996 (CEDAW/C/NAM/1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Nepal	22 May 1992	16 November 1998	Twenty-first (1999)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Netherlands	22 August 1992	19 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/NET/1) 17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.1) 20 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.2) 9 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.3)	Thirteenth (1994)
New Zealand	9 February 1986	3 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.41)	Seventh (1988)
Nicaragua	26 November 1982	22 September 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.55)	Eighth (1989)
Nigeria	13 July 1986	1 April 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.49)	Seventh (1987)
Norway	3 September 1982	18 November 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.7)	Third (1984)
Pakistan	11 April 1997		
Panama	28 November 1982	12 December 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.9)	Fourth (1985)
Papua New Guinea	11 February 1996		
Paraguay	6 May 1988	4 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2) 23 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1) 20 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Peru	13 October 1983	14 September 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.60)	Ninth (1990)
Philippines	4 September 1982	22 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.6)	Third (1984)
Poland	3 September 1982	10 October 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.31)	Sixth (1987)
Portugal	3 September 1982	19 July 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.21)	Fifth (1986)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1986	13 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.35)	Sixth (1987)
Republic of Moldova	31 July 1995	26 September 1998 CEDAW/C/MDA/1	
Romania	6 February 1983	14 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.45)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1982	2 March 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.12)	Second (1983)
Rwanda	3 September 1982	24 May 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.13)	Third (1984)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1986		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Saint Lucia	**7 November 1983**		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	**3 September 1982**	**27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3)** **28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)**	**Sixteenth (1997)**
Samoa	**25 October 1993**		
Senegal	**7 March 1986**	**5 November 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.42)**	**Seventh (1988)**
Seychelles	**4 June 1993**		
Sierra Leone	**11 December 1989**		
Singapore	**4 November 1996**		
Slovakia	**27 June 1994**	**29 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/SVK/1)** **11 May 1998 (CEDAW/C/SVK/1/Add.1)**	**Nineteenth (1998)**
Slovenia	**5 August 1993**	**23 November 1993 (CEDAW/C/SVN/1)**	**Sixteenth (1997)**
South Africa	**14 January 1997**	**5 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/ZAF/1)**	**Nineteenth (1998)**
Spain	**4 February 1985**	**20 August 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.30)**	**Sixth (1987)**
Sri Lanka	**4 November 1982**	**7 July 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.29)**	**Sixth (1987)**
Suriname	**31 March 1994**		
Sweden	**3 September 1982**	**22 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.8)**	**Second (1983)**
Switzerland	**26 April 1998**		
Tajikistan	**25 October 1994**		
Thailand	**8 September 1986**	**1 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.51)**	**Ninth (1990)**
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	**17 February 1995**		
Togo	**26 October 1984**		
Trinidad and Tobago	**11 February 1991**		
Tunisia	**20 October 1986**	**17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2)**	**Fourteenth (1995)**
Turkey	**19 January 1987**	**27 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.46)**	**Ninth (1990)**
Turkmenistan	**31 May 1998**		
Uganda	**21 August 1986**	**1 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2)**	**Fourteenth (1995)**

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Ukraine	3 September 1982	2 March 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.11)	Second (1983)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1987	25 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.52)	Ninth (1990)
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1986	9 March 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.57)	Ninth (1990)
Uruguay	8 November 1982	23 November 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.27)	Seventh (1988)
Uzbekistan	18 August 1996		
Vanuatu	8 October 1996		
Venezuela	1 June 1984	27 August 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.24)	Fifth (1986)
Viet Nam	19 March 1983	2 October 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.25)	Fifth (1986)
Yemen	29 June 1985	23 January 1989 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.61)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1983	3 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.18)	Fourth (1985)
Zambia	21 July 1986	6 March 1991 (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Zimbabwe	12 June 1992	28 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/ZWE/1)	Eighteenth (1998)
B. Second periodic reports			
Angola	17 October 1991		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1994	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1990	13 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2) 27 May 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.1) 19 August 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Armenia	13 September 1998		
Australia	27 August 1988	24 July 1992 (CEDAW/C/AUL/2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Austria	30 April 1987	18 December 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.27)	Tenth (1991)
Bahamas	5 November 1998		
Bangladesh	6 December 1989	23 February 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.30)	Twelfth (1993)
Barbados	3 September 1986	4 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/BAR/2-3)	Thirteenth (1994)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Belarus	3 September 1986	3 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.5)	Eighth (1989)
Belgium	9 August 1990	9 February 1993 (CEDAW/C/BEL/2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Belize	15 June 1995	19 June 1996 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2)	
Benin	11 April 1997		
Bhutan	30 September 1986		
Bolivia	8 July 1995		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 September 1998		
Brazil	2 March 1989		
Bulgaria	10 March 1987	6 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Burkina Faso	13 November 1992	11 December 1997 (CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3)	
Burundi	7 February 1997		
Cambodia	14 November 1997		
Canada	9 January 1987	20 January 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.11)	Ninth (1990)
Cape Verde	3 September 1986		
Central African Republic	21 July 1996		
China	3 September 1986	22 June 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.26)	Eleventh (1992)
Chile	6 January 1995	9 March 1995 (CEDAW/C/CHI/2)	Twenty-first (1999)
Colombia	18 February 1987	14 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3) 2 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Congo	25 August 1987		
Costa Rica	4 May 1991		
Croatia	9 October 1997		
Cuba	3 September 1986	13 March 1992 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3) 30 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Cyprus	22 August 1990	2 February 1994 (CEDAW/C/CYP/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Czech Republic	24 March 1998		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Democratic Republic of the Congo[b]	16 November 1991	24 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/ZAR/2)	
Denmark	21 May 1988	2 June 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.14)	Tenth (1991)
Dominica	3 September 1986		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1987	26 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Ecuador	9 December 1986	28 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.31)	Thirteenth (1994)
Egypt	18 October 1986	19 December 1986 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.2)	Ninth (1990)
El Salvador	18 September 1986	18 December 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.12)	Eleventh (1992)
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1989	6 January 1994 (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3)	
Estonia	20 November 1996		
Ethiopia	10 October 1986	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Finland	4 October 1991	9 February 1993 (CEDAW/C/FIN/2)	Fourteenth (1995)
France	13 January 1989	10 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/FRA/2 and Rev.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Gabon	20 February 1988		
Gambia	16 May 1998		
Germany	9 August 1990	8 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3)	
Ghana	1 February 1991	29 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/GHA/1-2)	Eleventh (1992)
Greece	7 July 1988	1 March 1996 (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3)	
Grenada	29 September 1995		
Guatemala	11 September 1987	2 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2 and Corr.1) 7 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2/ Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994) Thirteenth (1994)
Guinea	8 September 1987		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1990		
Guyana	3 September 1986		
Haiti	3 September 1986		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Honduras	2 April 1988	28 October 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.9)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1986	29 September 1986 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.1)	Seventh (1988)
Iceland	18 July 1990	5 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
India	8 August 1998		
Indonesia	13 October 1989	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Iraq	12 September 1991	13 October 1998 CEDAW/C/IRQ/2-3	
Ireland	22 January 1991	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3)	Twenty-first (1999)
Israel	2 November 1996	7 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Italy	10 July 1990	1 March 1994 (CEDAW/C/ITA/2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Jamaica	18 November 1989	17 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4)	
Japan	25 July 1990	21 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/JPN/2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Jordan	31 July 1997		
Kenya	8 April 1989	4 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/KEN/1-2)	Twelfth (1993)
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1986		
Latvia	14 May 1997		
Liberia	16 August 1989		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1994		
Lithuania	17 February 1999		
Luxembourg	4 March 1994	8 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/LUX/2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Madagascar	16 April 1994		
Malawi	11 April 1992		
Maldives	1 July 1998		
Mali	10 October 1990		
Malta	7 April 1996		
Mauritius	8 August 1989	23 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/MAR/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Mexico	3 September 1986	3 December 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.10)	Ninth (1990)
Mongolia	3 September 1986	17 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.7)	Ninth (1990)
Morocco	21 July 1998		
Namibia	23 December 1997		
Nepal	22 May 1996		
Netherlands	22 August 1996	10 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/NET/2) (CEDAW/C/NET/2/ Add.1) (CEDAW/C/NET/2/ Add.2)	
New Zealand	9 February 1990	3 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/NZE/2) 27 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/NZE/2/Add.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Nicaragua	26 November 1986	16 March 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.20)	Twelfth (1993)
Nigeria	13 July 1990	13 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Norway	3 September 1986	23 June 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.15)	Tenth (1991)
Panama	28 November 1986	17 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Paraguay	6 May 1992	4 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2) 23 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1) 20 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Peru	13 October 1987	13 February 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.29)	Fourteenth (1995)
Philippines	4 September 1986	12 December 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.17)	Tenth (1991)
Poland	3 September 1986	17 November 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.16)	Tenth (1991)
Portugal	3 September 1986	18 May 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.22)	Tenth (1991)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1990	19 December 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.28 and Corr.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Republic of Moldova	21 July 1999		
Romania	6 February 1987	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1986	10 February 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.4)	Eighth (1989)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Rwanda	3 September 1986	7 March 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.13)	Tenth (1991)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1990		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1987		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1986	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Samoa	25 October 1997		
Senegal	7 March 1990	23 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/SEN/2 and Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Seychelles	4 June 1997		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1993		
Slovakia	27 June 1998		
Slovenia	5 August 1997	26 April 1999 CEDAW/C/SVN/2	
Spain	4 February 1989	9 February 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.19)	Eleventh (1992)
Sri Lanka	4 November 1986	29 December 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.18)	Eleventh (1992)
Suriname	31 March 1998		
Sweden	3 September 1986	10 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.6)	Seventh (1988)
Thailand	8 September 1990	3 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3)	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	17 February 1999		
Togo	26 October 1988		
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1995		
Tunisia	20 October 1990	17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Turkey	19 January 1991	7 February 1994[e] 3 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Uganda	21 August 1990	1 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Ukraine	3 September 1986	13 August 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.8)	Ninth (1990)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1991	11 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/UK/2 and Amend.1)	Twelfth (1993)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1990	25 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Uruguay	8 November 1986	3 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/URY/2-3)	
Venezuela	1 June 1988	18 April 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.21)	Eleventh (1992)
Viet Nam	19 March 1987		
Yemen	29 June 1989	8 June 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.24 and Amend.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1987	31 May 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.23)	Tenth (1991)
Zambia	21 July 1990	6 March 1991 (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Zimbabwe	12 June 1996		
C. Third periodic reports			
Angola	17 October 1995		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1998	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1994	1 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/ARG/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1992	1 March 1995 (CEDAW/C/AUL/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Austria	30 April 1991	25 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4)	
Bangladesh	6 December 1993	26 January 1993[c] 27 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4)	Seventeenth (1997)
Barbados	3 September 1990	4 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/BAR/2-3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Belarus	3 September 1990	1 July 1993 (CEDAW/C/BLR/3)	
Belgium	9 August 1994	29 September 1998 CEDAW/C/BEL/3-4	
Belize	15 June 1999		
Bhutan	30 September 1990		
Bolivia	7 July 1999		
Brazil	2 March 1993		
Bulgaria	10 March 1991	6 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Burkina Faso	13 November 1996	11 December 1997 (CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3)	

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Canada	9 January 1991	9 September 1992 (CEDAW/C/CAN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Cape Verde	3 September 1990		
Chile	6 January 1999		
China	3 September 1990	29 May 1997 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4)	
Colombia	18 February 1991	14 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3) 2 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Congo	25 August 1991		
Costa Rica	4 May 1995		
Cuba	3 September 1990	13 March 1992 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3) 30 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Cyprus	22 August 1994		
Democratic Republic of the Congo[b]	16 November 1995	2 July 1998 (CEDAW/C/COD/3)	
Denmark	21 May 1992	7 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/DEN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Dominica	3 September 1990		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1991	26 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Ecuador	9 December 1990	23 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/ECU/3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Egypt	18 October 1990	30 January 1996 (CEDAW/C/EGY/3)	
El Salvador	18 September 1990		
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1993	6 January 1994 (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3)	
Ethiopia	10 October 1990	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Finland	4 October 1995	28 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/FIN/3)	
France	13 January 1993		
Gabon	20 February 1992		
Germany	9 August 1994	8 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3)	
Ghana	1 February 1995		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Greece	7 July 1992	1 March 1996 (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3)	
Guatemala	11 September 1991		
Guinea	8 September 1991		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1994		
Guyana	3 September 1990		
Haiti	3 September 1990		
Honduras	2 April 1992	31 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/HON/3)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1990	4 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/HUN/3) 3 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/HUN/3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Iceland	3 July 1994	15 July 1998 (CEDAW/C/ICE/3-4)	
Indonesia	13 October 1993	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Iraq	12 September 1995	13 October 1998 (CEDAW/C/IRQ/2-3)	
Ireland	22 January 1995	7 August 1997 (CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3)	
Italy	10 July 1994	21 June 1997 (CEDAW/C/ITA/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Jamaica	18 November 1993	17 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4)	
Japan	25 July 1994	28 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/JPN/3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Kenya	8 April 1993		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1990		
Liberia	16 August 1993		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1998		
Luxembourg	4 March 1998	12 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/LUX/3) 17 June 1998 (CEDAW/C/LUX/3/Add.1)	
Madagascar	16 April 1998		
Malawi	11 April 1996		
Mali	10 October 1994		
Mauritius	8 August 1993		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Mexico	3 September 1990	7 March 1997[b] (CEDAW/C/MEX/3-4)	Eighteenth (1998)
Mongolia	3 September 1990	8 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/MNG/3-4)	
New Zealand	9 February 1994	2 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4) 15 April 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4/Add.1)	Nineteenth (1998)
Nicaragua	26 November 1990	15 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/NIC/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Nigeria	13 July 1994	13 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Norway	3 September 1990	25 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/NOR/3)	Fourteenth (1995)
Panama	28 November 1990	17 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Paraguay	6 May 1996		
Peru	13 October 1991	25 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4)	Nineteenth (1998)
Philippines	4 September 1990	20 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/PHI/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Poland	3 September 1990	22 November 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.2)	Tenth (1991)
Portugal	3 September 1990	10 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.3)	Tenth (1991)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1994	8 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/KOR/3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Romania	6 February 1991	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1990	24 July 1991 (CEDAW/C/USR/3)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda	3 September 1990	18 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/RWA/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1994		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1991		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1990	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Senegal	7 March 1994		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1997		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Spain	4 February 1993	20 May 1996 (CEDAW/C/ESP/3)	
Sri Lanka	4 November 1990		
Sweden	3 September 1990	3 October 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Thailand	8 September 1994	3 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3)	
Togo	26 October 1992		
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1999		
Tunisia	20 October 1994		
Turkey	19 January 1995	3 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Uganda	21 August 1994		
Ukraine	3 September 1990	31 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/UKR/3) 21 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/UKR/3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1995	16 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/UK/3) 8 August 1997 (CEDAW/C/UK/3/Add.1)	
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1994	25 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Uruguay	8 November 1990	3 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/URY/2-3)	
Venezuela	1 June 1992	8 February 1995 (CEDAW/C/VEN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Viet Nam	19 March 1991		
Yemen	29 June 1993	13 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/YEM/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1991	14 October 1998 CEDAW/C/YUG/3	
Zambia	21 July 1994		
D. Fourth periodic reports			
Argentina	14 August 1998		
Australia	27 August 1996		
Austria	30 April 1995	25 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4)	
Bangladesh	6 December 1997	27 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4)	Seventeenth (1997)
Barbados	3 September 1994		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Belarus	3 September 1994		
Belgium	9 August 1998	29 October 1998 (CEDAW/C/BEL/3-4)	
Bhutan	30 September 1994		
Brazil	2 March 1997		
Bulgaria	10 March 1995		
Canada	9 January 1995	2 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/CAN/4)	Sixteenth (1997)
Cape Verde	3 September 1994		
China	3 September 1994	29 May 1997 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4)	
Colombia	18 February 1995	8 July 1997 (CEDAW/C/COL/4)	
Congo	25 August 1995		
Costa Rica	4 May 1999		
Cuba	3 September 1994		
Denmark	21 May 1996	9 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/DEN/4)	
Dominica	3 September 1994		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1995	29 October 1997 (CEDAW/C/DOM/4)	Eighteenth (1998)
Ecuador	9 December 1994		
Egypt	18 October 1994		
El Salvador	18 October 1994		
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1997		
Ethiopia	10 October 1994		
France	13 January 1997		
Gabon	20 February 1996		
Germany	9 August 1998	27 October 1998 (CEDAW/C/DEU/4)	
Greece	7 July 1996		
Guatemala	11 September 1995		
Guinea	8 September 1995		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1998		
Guyana	3 September 1994		
Haiti	3 September 1994		
Honduras	2 April 1996		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Hungary	**3 September 1994**		
Iceland	**3 July 1998**	**15 July 1998 (CEDAW/C/ICE/3-4)**	
Ireland	**22 January 1999**		
Italy	**10 July 1998**		
Indonesia	**13 October 1997**		
Jamaica	**18 November 1997**	**17 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4)**	
Japan	**25 July 1998**	**24 July 1998 (CEDAW/C/JPN/4)**	
Kenya	**8 April 1997**		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	**13 September 1994**		
Liberia	**16 August 1997**		
Mali	**10 October 1998**		
Mauritius	**8 August 1997**		
Mexico	**3 September 1994**	**7 March 1997[b] (CEDAW/C/MEX/3-4)**	**Eighteenth (1998)**
Mongolia	**3 September 1994**	**8 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/MNG/3-4)**	
New Zealand	**9 February 1998**	**2 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4) 15 April 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4)**	**Nineteenth (1998)**
Nicaragua	**26 November 1994**	**16 June 1998 (CEDAW/C/NIC/4)**	
Norway	**3 September 1994**	**1 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/NOR/4)**	**Fourteenth (1995)**
Panama	**28 November 1994**		
Peru	**13 October 1995**	**25 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4)**	**Nineteenth (1998)**
Philippines	**4 September 1994**	**22 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/PHI/4)**	**Sixteenth (1997)**
Poland	**3 September 1994**		
Portugal	**3 September 1994**		
Republic of Korea	**26 January 1998**	**27 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/KOR/4)**	**Nineteenth (1998)**
Romania	**6 February 1995**	**10 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/ROM/4-5)**	

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Russian Federation	3 September 1994	31 August 1994 (CEDAW/C/USR/4)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda	3 September 1994		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1998		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1995		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1994		
Senegal	7 March 1998		
Spain	4 February 1997	20 October 1998 (CEDAW/C/ESP/4)	Twenty-first (1999)
Sri Lanka	4 November 1994		
Sweden	3 September 1994	21 May 1996 (CEDAW/C/SWE/4)	
Thailand	8 September 1998		
Togo	26 October 1996		
Tunisia	20 October 1998		
Turkey	19 January 1999		
Uganda	21 August 1998		
Ukraine	3 November 1994		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1995	19 January 1999 (CEDAW/C/UK/4 and CEDAW/C/UK/4/Add.1 to Add.4)	Twenty-first (1999)
Uruguay	8 November 1994		
Venezuela	1 June 1996		
Viet Nam	19 March 1995		
Yemen	29 June 1997		
Yugoslavia	28 March 1995		
Zambia	21 July 1998		
E. Fifth periodic reports			
Romania	6 February 1995	10 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/ROM/4-5)	
Russian Federation	3 September 1998	3 March 1999 (CEDAW/C/USR/5)	
F. Reports submitted on an exceptional basis			
Democratic Republic of the Congo[b]		16 January 1997 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.317)	Sixteenth (1997)
Croatia		15 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/CRO/SP.1)	Fourteenth (1995)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Rwanda		31 January 1996 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.306)	Fifteenth (1996)
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)		2 December 1993 (CEDAW/C/YUG/SP.1) 2 February 1994 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.254)	Thirteenth (1994)

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[a] One year prior to the due date, the Secretary-General invites the State party to submit its report.

[b] Effective 17 May 1997, Zaire was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[c] Report withdrawn.

Annex VI

List of speakers who addressed the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Solemn commemoration

Aída González Martínez, Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General

Message from Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, read by Bacre Waly Ndiaye, Director, New York Office of the High Commissioner

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Angela E.V. King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

Yakin Ertürk, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women

Luvsandanzangyn Ider, former Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Round-table discussion

Charlotte Abaka, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Feride Acar, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Ryoko Akamatsu, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Emna Aouij, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Fabrizio Bassani, Executive Director, New York Liaison Office of the World Health Organization

Silvia Cartwright, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Ivanka Corti, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Feng Cui, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Shanti Dairiam, Director, International Women's Rights Action Watch, Asia-Pacific

Nguyen Ngoc Dung, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Miriam Estrada, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Elizabeth Evatt, former Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and Member, Human Rights Committee

Grete Fenger-Moller, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Yolanda Ferrer Gomez, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Arvonne Fraser, Founder, International Women's Rights Action Watch

Lilian Gurdulich de Correa, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Vinitha Jayasinghe, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Salma Khan, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and former Chairperson of the Committee

Yung-Chung Kim, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Franklyn Lisk, Director, New York Liaison Office of the International Labour Organization

Pirkko Anneli Makinen, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Cecilia Medina-Quiroga, Chairperson, Human Rights Committee

Alma Montenegro de Fletcher, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Mohamed Nizamuddin, Director, Technical and Policy Division, United Nations Population Fund

Flavia Pansieri, Deputy Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women

Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund

Zelmira Regazzoli, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling, Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Nina Sibal, Director, New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Rakel Surlien, former Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Boubacar Toure, Director, New York Liaison Office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Eimi Watanabe, Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme

Annex VII

States parties which submitted their observations on the concluding comments adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The following States parties submitted observations on the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women during the period 1 January to 15 August 1999: Greece, Mexico, China.